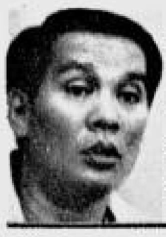


■ Metro / A15

Parañaque mayor says Joey left city deep in debt

■ News / A2

Pimentel presses probe of Comelec's aborted automation

■ Sports / A17

Boxing team down to 2 as Payla loses to Uzbek in Athens

■ News / A5

New US military strategy to reduce troops in Asia

■ BYLINE INQUIRER

Baha sa Camanava: Gaano na kalala?

Ngayong alas-8 ng gabi, sa ABC

De Venecia kicks out Kampi from House majority coalition

UMATRAS ANG MGA KAKAMPI!

By Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo

THE NEWLY revived Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) was booted yesterday out of the "new coalesced ma-

DE VENECIA / A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Bulacan tilapia, bangus, hito going global in 2005

By Carmela Reyes
PDI Central Luzon Desk

PULILAN, Bulacan—Expect Bulacan-grown tilapia, bangus (milkfish) and hito (catfish) to get into the global swim of things.

Fisher Farms Inc., a fish processing company based in Barangay Dampol 2 in this town, is

BULACAN TILAPIA/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, August 19, 2004 ★★ 44 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 253 P18 website: www.inq7.net

A. ROMULO
DFA

E. ERMITA
Exec. Secretary

Avelino CRUZ
Defense

R. GONZALEZ
Justice

I. BUNYE
Press secretary

N. DE CASTRO
Housing

ACE DURANO
Tourism

Mike DEFENSOR
DENR

E. AGLIPAY
PNP chief

F. LICUANAN
Clark/Subic dev't

H. EBDANE
NSA

No surprises in revamp

Partial list of 33 new appointees to President's Cabinet

By Juliet Labog-Javellana *in Manila*
and Bernadette Parco *PDI Visayas Bureau*

AFTER months of suspense for Cabinet members, there were hardly any surprises when Malacañang released yesterday a "partial list" of 33 appointees to President Macapagal-Arroyo's official family and other top government posts.

The list was announced at 7:15 p.m. by Ignacio Bunye, Ms Arroyo's spokesperson and incoming press secretary, at the Office of the President in Cebu City, or the so-called Malacañang in the South.

As expected, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita was appointed executive secretary in place of Alberto Romulo, who was named foreign secretary.

Former Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao was appointed chief of the Presidential Management Staff. In his place would be former National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

Avelino "Nonong" Cruz Jr., former chief presidential legal counsel, replaced Ermita as defense secretary, and Vice President Noli de Castro replaced Housing Secretary Michael Defensor as chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Center. Defensor was in turn named environment secretary.

Former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun will chair the Natural Resources and Mining Corp.

Also as expected, Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. was appointed national security adviser, and his deputy, Edgardo Aglipay, the new PNP chief.

The other appointees to Cabinet posts were former Batanes Rep. Florencio "Butch" Abad, educa-

NO SURPRISES/ A4

FAMILY first: Reunion of Army 1st Lt. Ronaldo Fidelino with wife Leah and daughter Nicole after his release on Wednesday with Private First Class Ronel Nemeño in a remote mountain village in Presentacion town, Camarines Sur. The two soldiers were captured by the NPA more than five months ago after a five-hour clash between government troops and the communist rebels.

Probe set on bungling of tax credit fraud cases

By Michelle V. Remo, *Business*
and Armand N. Nocum

FINANCE Secretary Juanita Amatong ordered yesterday the antigraft team of her office to investigate the alleged bungling of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) in prosecuting tax fraud cases involving more than P1 billion that led to their dismissal.

Lawmakers were aghast over reports that the BOC and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) had lost or were poised to lose 28 of the 60 collection cases they filed in 2001 and 2002. Senators and congressmen have vowed to undertake an inquiry into why the cases were dismissed.

Amatong issued the order to Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan, head of the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS), which was created last year to conduct a lifestyle check on officials of the BOC and the BIR.

The BOC, the BIR and the One Stop Shop Interagency Tax Credit and Drawback Center (OSS) are under the Department of Finance.

The BOC and BIR have the exclusive jurisdiction under the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines and the National Internal Revenue Code, respectively, to file collection cases involving unpaid duties and taxes

PROBE/ A6

Builder accuses Neda of railroading North Rail

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

ONE OF the country's biggest construction firms is accusing the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) of railroading the $503-million North Rail project to favor the Chinese government.

DMCI Holdings Inc. said the terms of the 32.1-km North Rail project could be disadvantageous to the public because these were cloaked in secrecy.

"We will never know if the project was overpriced or not because it did not go through a competitive bid," DMCI president Isidro Consunji said in an interview. "The public does not even know whether it would get a Volkswagen or a Rolls Royce for the money that the government would borrow and spend on the project."

A diesel-fed train will run along the tracks from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will take up the implementation of the North Rail project with Beijing in her state visit to China next month.

Consunji decried the "double standard" on the part of Neda chief Romulo Neri, who has been "eerily silent" on the North Rail

BUILDER/ A6

Freed soldiers plead for peace

By Juan Escandor Jr.,
Alan Pelayo and Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Christian V. Esguerra

PRESENTACION, Camarines Sur—He had one plea before he was freed yesterday from almost six months of captivity by communist rebels: Let's get on with the peace talks.

Army Lt. Ronaldo Fidelino aired this appeal inside a New People's Army camp in Bicol before he and Pfc. Ronel Nemeño were brought down to a rendezvous area where they were turned over to the International Committee of the Red Cross—ending the 171-day saga.

"The government and the National Democratic Front should resume the peace negotiations if only to solve the 35-year communist rebellion and avoid captivity of government soldiers," Fidelino said.

Before handing over their captives to the ICRC representatives, the rebels removed the soldiers' handcuffs and the pair then signed their release papers in

FREED SOLDIERS/ A4

UE graduate tops medical board exams

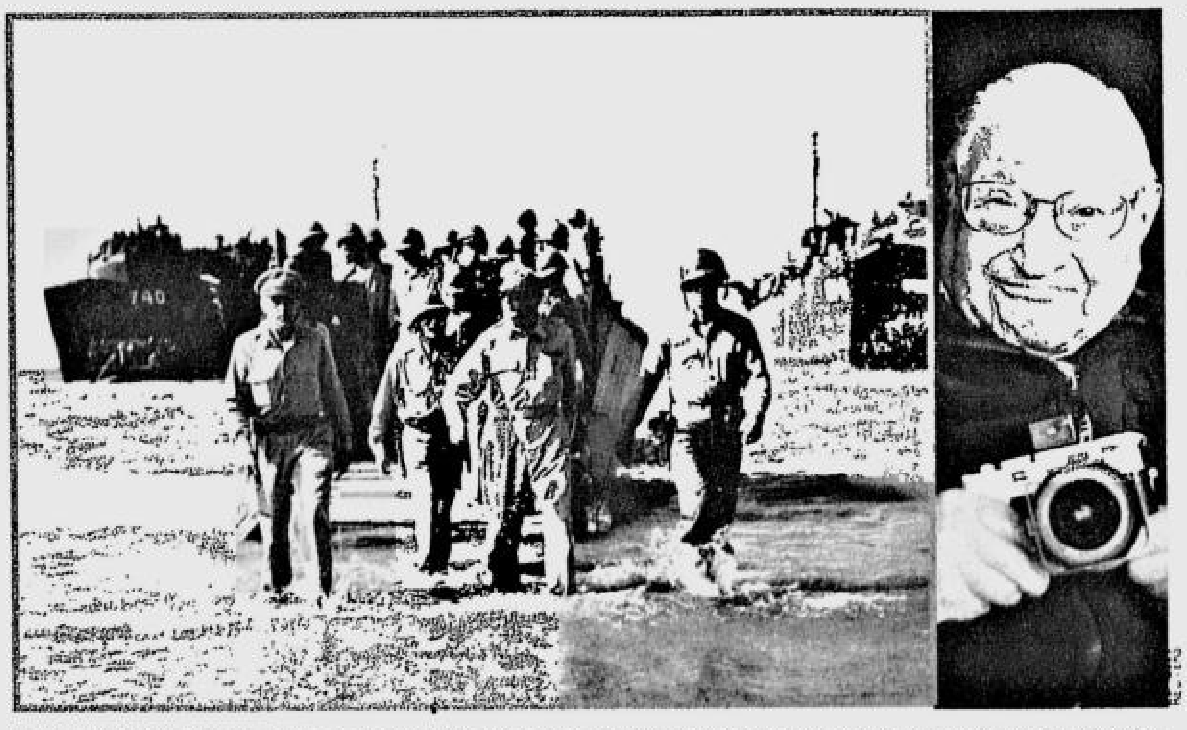
KAREN Lucero Neilsen of the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center topped the list of 1,183 new doctors, followed by Rene Luis Famorca Filarca of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

A total of 2,301 took the Physician Licensure Examination given by the Board of Medicine this month in Manila and Cebu. Oath taking is set on Sept. 19 at the Philippine International Convention Center on Roxas Boulevard.

The others in the top 20 list:

Leonardo E. Lopez Jr, University of the Philippines-Manila; Hazel A. Tuazon, St. Luke's College of Medicine; Maria Luisa Cecilia C. Rivera, University of Santo Tomas; Alexander Edward de la Cruz

UE GRADUATE/ A6



CARL MYDANS; 97: This picture seen around the world and enshrined in the annals of war history that shows Gen. Douglas MacArthur (center) wading ashore Red Beach, Palo, Leyte, on his return to the Philippines in 1944 was shot by Carl Mydans (at right), Life Magazine's pioneer of photojournalism. Mydans died Tuesday in New York at age 97. *(Story on Page A9.)*

PNP aims sight at 'loose' guns

By Christian V. Esguerra

THEY may not be economists but they have an idea or two about how to help fix the chronic national deficit.

Aware that the administration is trying desperately to raise revenues, the Philippine National Police hopes to generate at least P300 million in income for the government by going after some 200,000 owners of loose or unlicensed firearms.

The Civil Security Group (CSG), the PNP's main income-generating unit, has drawn up an elaborate program to jack up its income. At the top of the project is to have loose firearms registered.

The 200,000 guns are considered "loose" because their legitimate owners have yet to renew their registrations, according to Senior Supt. Arturo Cacdac, chief of the Firearms and Explosives Division (FED).

That number is on top of the estimated figure of 320,995 loose firearms since the time of the Corazon Aquino administration, counting those in the hands of criminal gangs, "private armies" and other groups.

PNP AIMS/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Luzon and Western Visayas will have occasional rains. The rest of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Mindanao will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/19/04

Metro Manila	Occasional Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Occasional Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Occasional Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Occasional Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Occasional Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Occasional Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2004

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Second FRONTPAGE

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Miriam questions Smokey agreement

SEN. Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday said the government was on the losing end in the agreement it made with R-II Builders to terminate their joint venture to develop the Smokey Mountain garbage dump into a residential and commercial complex.

Santiago said she agreed with the termination of the contract but not with the terms and conditions stated in the agreement that was signed on Aug. 27, 2003.

"The conditions in terminating the contract are questionable because it appears the government would stand to lose here," said Santiago, who denounced the contract with businessman Reghis Romero's R-II Builders in a privilege speech last week, calling it a scam.

Santiago called for a Senate investigation of the Smokey Mountain project and said former President Fidel Ramos, under whose administration it was approved, would have to face the probe.

But it was subsequently revealed that the contract between the National Housing Authority and R-II Builders had been terminated last year. Under the terms of the termination agreement, the government would pay R-II Builders P250 million as a partial settlement of expenses the firm incurred since the project was begun in 1995.

It also provides for the transfer of a three-hectare portion of the 17-ha industrial area in Vitas, Tondo to R-II Builders as part of its compensation as "developer."

The government is also to pay the balance of the P1.8 billion in expenses being claimed by the Romero firm.

But Santiago said there was no need for the government to negotiate with Romero. She said it should have "unilaterally" rescinded the contract, filed a case against Romero for breach of contract and sought damages.

She also called the contract with R-II Builders "invalid, illegal and unconstitutional" because the reclaimed land that Smokey Mountain partially sits on was public land that could not be transferred to a private corporation without congressional approval.

Officials at the NHA and R-II Builders Inc. yesterday were mum about the termination agreement.

Architect Francis Alican, area manager of the NHA and former project manager of the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project (SMDRP), said his lawyers had told him not to talk as he is prohibited by law from making statements on a case that is under judicial consideration.

"We will answer all questions before the Supreme Court," Alican said in telephone interview. *Christine Avendaño and Fe Zamora*

A MOTHER and her daughter cross an unfinished dirt road at the Smokey Mountain housing project in Tondo. Construction is at a standstill for lack of funds. The project is now under Senate investigation following allegations of anomalies.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

ERC wants court to reverse ruling on Meralco rate hike

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has asked the Court of Appeals to reconsider its ruling last month nullifying the regulatory agency's approval of a rate increase petition from the Manila Electric Co.

In a motion filed on Monday, ERC general counsel Francis Saturnino Juan said it was not true as the court said that the ERC did not examine Meralco's books before approving the rate hike application.

In its July ruling, the CA's 15th Division annulled the ERC approval of the Meralco hike and ordered the Commission on Audit look into the books, records and accounts of Meralco.

Juan said the COA did thoroughly examine Meralco's records and accounts before the ERC approved the power utility's petition.

But he argued that under the law, a COA audit was not a prerequisite for the approval of any power rate hike application.

He said a COA audit should not be made mandatory or binding for regulatory agencies like the ERC as it would "(flout) the discretionary nature of the power granted to them by law."

"To say that ERC erred in deciding the cases in the absence of a COA audit is like saying that ERC cannot validly exercise its own statutorily granted jurisdiction without COA's intervention," Juan said.

Such a proposition "cannot be sustained without disregarding the letter and spirit" of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, he said.

He said the CA had relied on the Office of the Solicitor General's claim that no COA audit was made before the ERC decided on Meralco's petition for a rate increase.

But in fact, ERC Chair Fe Barin had asked the COA on Feb. 20, 2002 to look into Meralco's books. He said four COA auditors later conducted the audit and the ERC was informed of the results on June 24, 2002.

He said that it was ERC's predecessor, the Energy Regulatory Board, that denied the OSG's motion for a COA audit on the ground that it was premature.

He pointed out that the job of determining power rates was "not simply a matter of mathematical computation" of the rates after an audit of a utility's books.

"Rate-fixing is more than that. It is the product of expert judgement. It involves the balancing of the interests of the investors and the consumers," Juan said.

He said ERC strictly followed due process and listened to all sides before approving the Meralco application for rate unbundling, that is, the breaking down to specific components of an electricity bill to make it clearer to consumers.

When it approved Meralco's unbundling petition in May 2003, the ERC also approved an increase of 8.65 centavos per kilowatt-hour in the distribution rate and 8.35 centavos per kWh in the generation and transmission rate, for a total of 17 centavos per kWh.

The unbundling increase took effect in June 2003.

NOTICE AND WARNING

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ADVT.

24-hour watch mulled on corrupt officials

By Armand N. Nocum

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman wants to add teeth to the lifestyle check program by putting suspected corrupt officials under 24-hour surveillance.

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo said he would field graft investigators—idealistic and fresh out of college—to act as "embedded" snoops in the offices of suspected officials.

"Some customs and internal revenue officials would be under 24-hour surveillance," he told reporters Tuesday night.

Marcelo said at least three teams of graft investigators would check out the homes these officials own, the luxury cars they drive, the nightclubs they patronize, and the kind of people they meet.

Marcelo, who has proven that the government's top antigraft agency means business, said his men trained with broadcasters—like GMA-7's Mike Enriquez—who regularly do surveillance or entrapment operations.

However, they still have to purchase expensive cameras and additional vehicles for the surveillance teams.

"We are asking business groups to donate their used cars for our surveillance operations, " he said.

These seemingly extraordinary means of catching crooks, Marcelo revealed, was patterned after Hong Kong's famed Independent Commission Against Graft (ICAG), which succeeded in ridding the former British colony of graft.

Marcelo said they would soon be forming a field investigation office under Melchor Arthur H. Carandang, current head of the Ombudsman's Fact, Intelligence and Research Office, to oversee surveillance operations.

RP to send troops to Iraq only through United Nations

By TJ Burgonio

IF THE Philippines were to decide to send another humanitarian contingent to Iraq, it could do so only through the United States-led multinational force, a foreign affairs official said yesterday.

Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., the Philippines' permanent representative to the United Nations, made this clarification amid press reports quoting various foreign affairs officials as saying the government would be open to dispatching another contingent to the war-torn country under the aegis of the United Nations.

The supposed plan for redeployment of Philippine forces to Iraq have raised a storm of controversy in Congress and the streets even as various DFA officials denied that there was any such plan.

Yesterday a broad coalition of antiwar activists urged Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert to scuttle the supposed plan to send another humanitarian contingent to Iraq next year.

"Don't send troops back to Iraq! Don't send troops back to Iraq!" they chanted as they picketed the foreign affairs office in Pasay City.

If it presses ahead with the plan, the government would be putting troops in harm's way and recognizing an "illegal puppet government," said Rasti Delizo, secretary general of Peace Camp, which groups 65 organizations opposed to the war.

"We can expect more Angelo de la Cruzes—this time to come back dead," he added.

Comelec poll deal overpriced —Pimentel

By Michael Lim Ubac and Martin P. Marfil

AS IF the exposés of Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Juan Ponce Enrile were not enough, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Ñene" Q. Pimentel Jr. yesterday asked the upper house to investigate yet another anomaly, this time involving the aborted automation of the 2004 elections.

In a privilege speech, Pimentel claimed that the purchase of 1,991 units of automated counting machines (ACMs) by the Commission on Elections was "grossly overpriced" by as much as P300 million.

He said the Filipino people ended up as the losers because when the contract was rescinded by the high court early this year, the machines were already bought by the poll body.

Padded costs

According to Pimentel, official documents showed that the Comelec paid the Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. (MPEI) P856,914,796 for the ACMs, although the actual cost of the machines was only P550,810,150, or a difference and loss to the government of P306,104,646.

"The cost of the ACMs accounted for the lion's share of the total price of P1,248,949,088 of the poll computerization contract awarded to Mega Pacific," said the opposition senator.

Also, vote counting in the May 10, 2004 elections was not automated. People had to go through a long, tedious and slow count of the results of the national and local elections.

"Just as the tantalizing beauty of Delilah blinded the mighty Samson, diverting him from his original mission to destroy the Philistines of old, the mega bucks of the deal apparently seduced the supposedly staid members of the Comelec and distracted them from their primary goal—to annihilate the modern-day Philistines of our electoral system," Pimentel said.

Ridiculous and illogical

Asked to comment on the allegations, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said Pimentel's charges were "ridiculous and illogical."

"This means that we got more than one-half (of the P1.2 billion)... This is bigger than the owners' profits," he said.

Pimentel noted that the contract was declared null and void by the Supreme Court on Jan. 13, 2004 due to legal infirmities and disregard of Comelec bidding rules and procedures.

He said additional losses were incurred by the government when the poll body paid Mega Pacific at the exchange rate of US$1 to P58 when the actual exchange rate at the time was US$1 to P55.

Joint RP-US military exercises to continue despite strained ties

By TJ Burgonio

JOINT military exercises between Filipino and American troops will continue as scheduled in the next four months despite the strained relations between the Philippines and the United States in the aftermath of last month's pullout of Filipino troops from Iraq.

After the recent joint exercise, codenamed Balanced Piston 04-3, ended on Friday in North Cotabato, another joint naval exercise, dubbed Palah 05-1, kicked off in Mindanao, officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

These joint exercises show that the relations between the two countries are "on track," Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert said.

Balanced Piston, staged for three weeks in Carmen starting July 26, honed the skills of 199 Filipino troops from the Army's 602nd Brigade in marksmanship, combat medical skills and small unit tactics, said Foreign Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes II.

The joint training, a component of the military assistance program under the Visiting Forces Agreement, has been hailed a success by Philippine and US officials, added Paredes, executive director of the VFA Commission.

"The joint military training shows that our relations with the United States are firmly on track," Albert said in a statement.

The Philippine government's decision to withdraw its 51-man humanitarian contingent from Iraq to save a Filipino truck driver held captive by Iraqi militants last month had set off speculations that the Philippines could face backlash from the United States.

Palah, or Exercise Pangdagat, Lupa at Himpapawid, a navy-to-navy exercise involving combat troops of the Philippine Special Warfare Group and the US Navy Seals, kicked off last Aug. 5 and will end on Dec. 31, Paredes said.

It was not known, however, how many troops are involved and the number of ships participating in the exercise.

"If it's marine exercise, any of our coastal areas maybe a site for exercises like this," he said.

Apart from this, an information exchange training, dubbed RP-US Joint Advisors Intel Fusion Teams, is simultaneously being conducted in Mindanao, Paredes said. He could not provide further details.

Another naval maneuver exercise, codenamed Maritime Survey Exercises 04-4 (Marsuvex), has been lined up for the fourth quarter of the year.

"We might have another Balanced Piston, 04-4, immediately after the just concluded one," Paredes said.

SC bares finalists in judiciary awards

By Philip C. tubeza

THE SUPREME Court yesterday announced the finalists in this year's Judicial Excellence Awards, the high tribunal's spokesperson said yesterday.

Lawyer Ismael Khan Jr., head of the SC public information office, said the SC Committee on Judicial Excellence has trimmed down the list of nominees for the country's most outstanding judges and clerks of court.

The results would be released next week while the awards ceremonies will be held on Sept. 17 at the SC.

Khan said the Committee on Judicial Excellence, through the Board of Judges, will choose the winners for best regional trial court judges, best pre-trial judges, best civil case decision, best criminal case decision and best clerks of court for first and second-level courts.

The finalists for best RTC judges are Henry D. Arles, Juliana D. Azarraga, Elsa I. de Guzman, Agustin S. Dizon, Siméon P. Dumdum Jr., Marissa M. Guillen, Gabriel T. Ingles, Edgardo T. Lloren, Sixto C. Marella Jr. and Myrna D. Vidal.

The winners will be chosen after a review of their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out their duties and responsibilities and their initiatives, innovativeness and resourcefulness in meeting the exigencies of the service.

The search committee will also take into account the public perception of the nominees' honesty, impartiality, diligence, avoiding impropriety "and appearance of impropriety" in all activities.

Khan said the winners should also be noted for upholding judicial integrity and independence; their contributions to the administration of justice, and leadership in the judiciary and the community.

The Committee on Judicial Excellence is chaired this year by Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban with Justice Antonio T. Carpio as vice chairman. The members are Khan, Court Administrator Presbitero J. Velasco Jr., Atty. Luzviminda D. Puno (clerk of court), Atty. Edna E. Diño (chief attorney), and Joseph Bryan Hilary P. Davide (chief justice's staff head).

This is the first time the SC will be handling the search exclusively. Last year, the Committee coordinated with the Foundation for Judicial Excellence, a private organization, which had been managing the search since 1991.

Beginning this year, however, the search will no longer include awards for Outstanding Prosecutors and Public Attorneys which will be now exclusive to members of the judiciary.

Khan said that the tribunal came up with the awards 13 years ago to inspire judiciary members to perform better.

"It's part of the Supreme Court's continuing effort to reform the judicial branch by recognizing its best performers," Khan said.

575 Pinoys still detained in jails in Middle East

By Cynthia D. Balana

AT LEAST 575 more Filipinos, mostly domestic helpers, were still languishing in jails in Kuwait, Israel and Bahrain last year, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

This brings the total of Filipino prisoners outside the Philippines to 3,431, and the number of countries reported with Filipino detainees to 59.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, third district, Bukidnon) said the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel reported that from January to June last year, 246 Filipinos were under house arrest, or had pending cases in court.

They were detained in the Ramie, Hadera and Nazareth prisons in Israel. One Filipino, detained at Abu Khabir maximum security prison, is serving three life-terms for murder.

In Kuwait, 327 Filipinos, 22 of whom are men, were detained during the same period.

But the alleged offenses committed by Filipino women paled in comparison to the offenses committed against them, Zubiri said.

In the first six months of the year, Filipino women lodged with the Philippine embassy, 412 complaints of physical abuse, 258 complaints of verbal abuse, and 525 complaints of oppressive working conditions against their employers.

Zubiri also said that based on the report of the office of the foreign undersecretary for migrant workers affairs in the DFA, majority of the detained workers were not given a day-off by employers.

In Bahrain, a Filipino and a Filipina were in detention during the first half of last year. The Filipina, who was convicted of arson, was the subject of a campaign for royal clemency.

Of last year's total of 3,431 Filipino overseas detainees, 979 were women.

NEWSBRIEFS

Veritas reporter buried

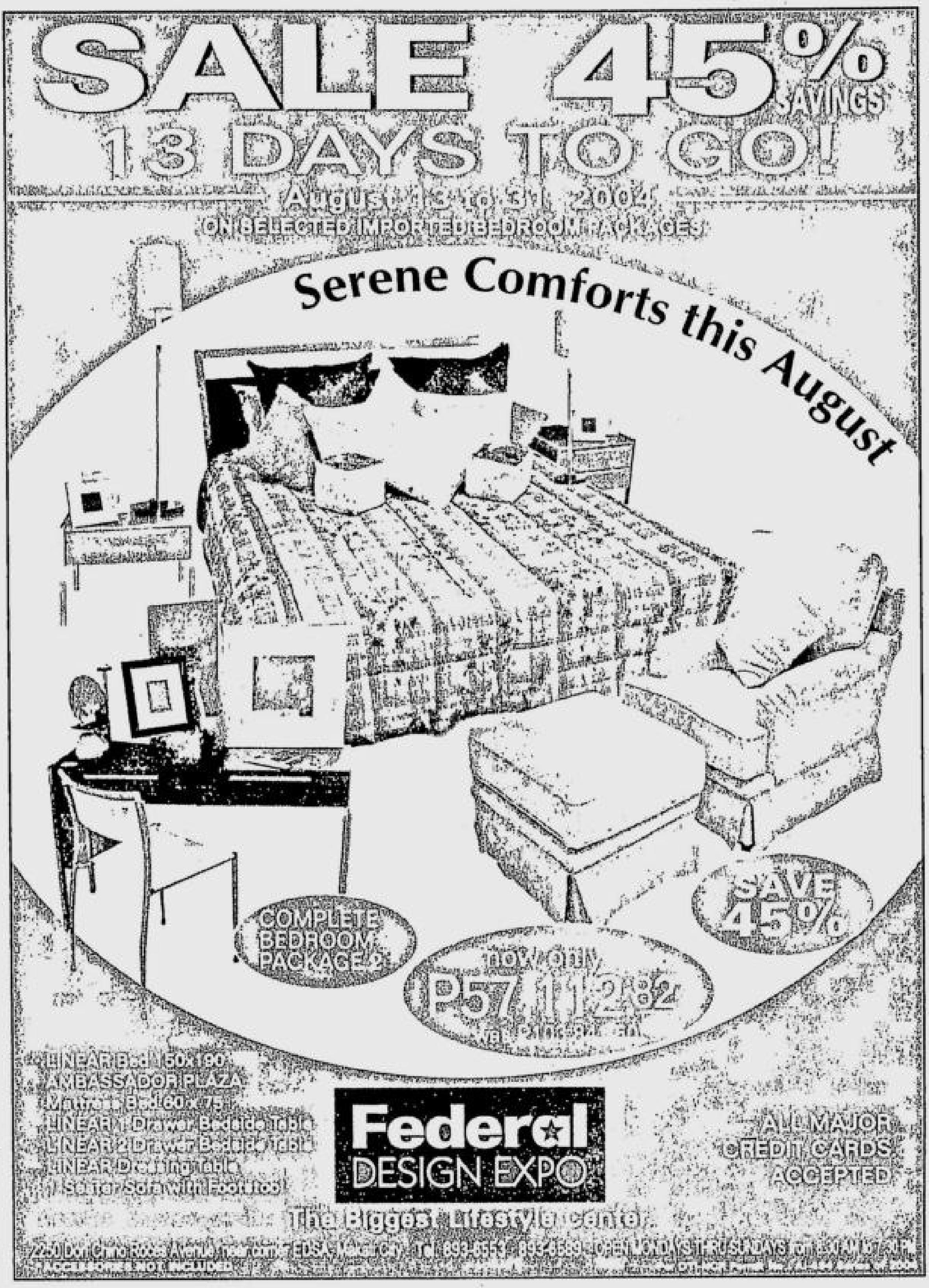
VICTORIA, Laguna—A convoy of about 50 vehicles carrying relatives, neighbors, town mates from Nagcarlan town and friends joined the funeral procession on Tuesday afternoon of slain Radio Veritas reporter Fernando Consignado, who was killed in Nagcarlan town Thursday last week. The funeral followed a Mass at 2 p.m. in La Resurrection Parish here. Fr. Romulo Ponte, former Victoria parish priest and Mass celebrant, said in his homily that the death of Consignado, the fourth media casualty in 12 days, was alarming. Consignado's four children, five grandchildren and eight siblings were all on hand for the Mass and the interment at the Garden of Angels Cemetery here. His killer, who shot the victim in the head, is still at large and remains unidentified. *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

36 solons form women's bloc

SOME 36 congresswomen in the 13th Congress have formed the Lady Legislators Bloc to make the women voice strong in the House. Rep. Cynthia Villar (Nacionalista Party-Las Piñas), who was elected convenor and president of the bloc for the second time, said the group was a force to reckon with in the 12th Congress. The group, together with the House committee on women, were behind the enactment of women and family-related measures that included the Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children Act, the Anti-Domestic Violence Act, and an Act Eliminating the Worst forms of Child Labor and Affording Stronger Protection to Children. In the past three years, the women's bloc in Congress launched various programs for the benefit of the women sector ranging from free medical services, and plays regarding courage of women. These include the "Vagina Monologue" and "Ang Hibik at Himagsik ni Victoria Laktaw." It also sponsored massive discussion of women's rights and pushed for the implementation of Gender and Development (GAD) fund for women's concerns. *Cynthia D. Balana*

Business backs GMA appointees

LEADERS of the country's largest business groups have expressed full support for President Macapagal Arroyo on her appointments to the Cabinet as they denied media reports that erroneously quoted them as pushing for the retention of three Cabinet secretaries. The statement of support was issued by Noemi Saludo, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI); Donald Dee, president of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines; Sergio Ortiz-Luiz, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation; Francis Chua, chair of the PCCI Philippines Foundation; and Miguel Varela, chair emeritus and president of the PCCI Philippines Inc. Foundation. They said the President should have a free hand in her appointments, and in choosing who she feels would be the best and brightest of the candidates for her cabinet. The business leaders also also expressed full support for the appointment of Arthur Yap as agriculture secretary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AMBASSADOR PLAZA Mattress Bed 60 x 75
LINEAR 1 Drawer Bedside Table
LINEAR 2 Drawer Bedside Table
LINEAR Dressing Table
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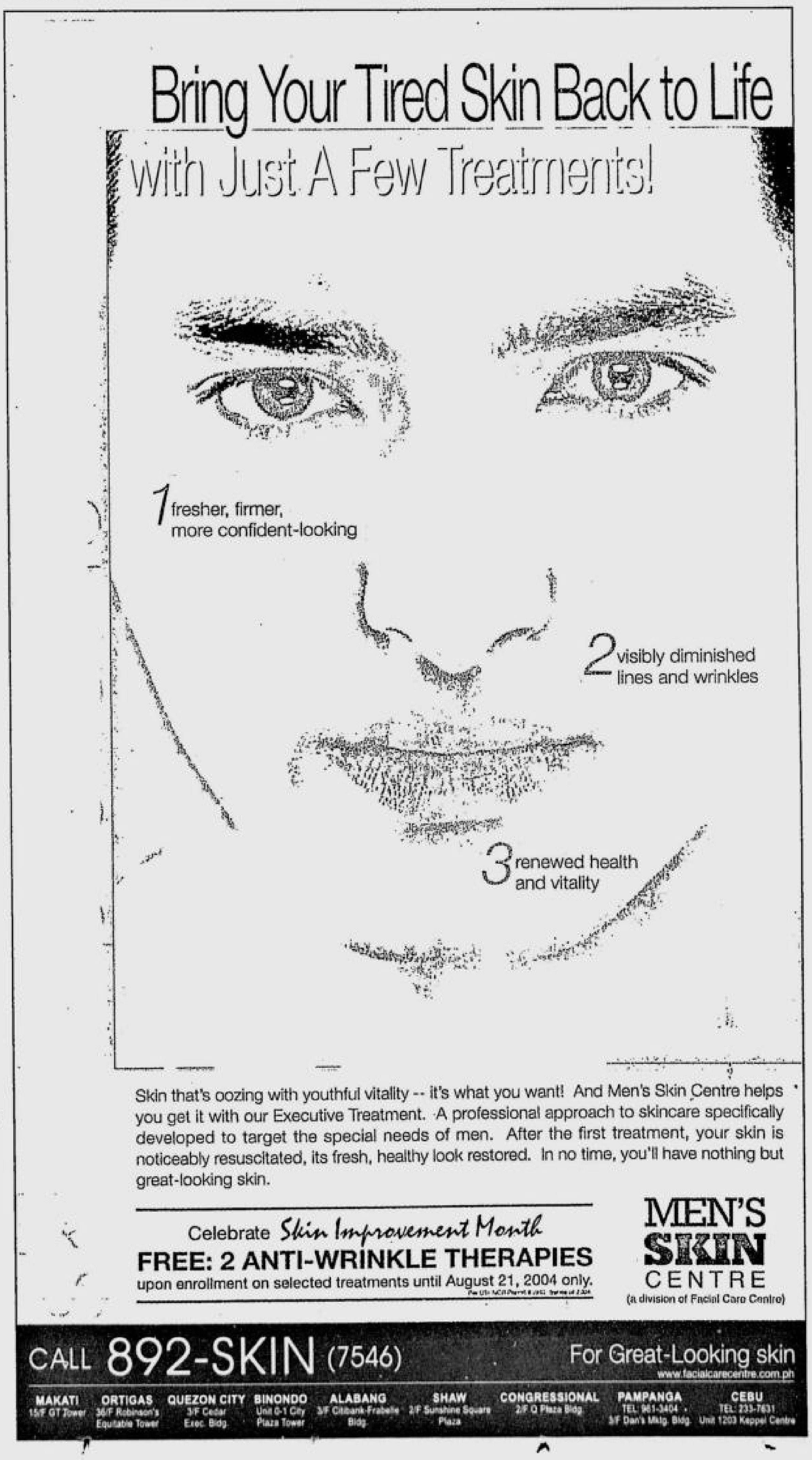
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Freed soldiers plead for peace upon release

From page A1

front of a rural health center, while dozens of villagers watched.

Fidelino and Nemeño quickly dispelled any concern that they might be afflicted with the so-called "Stockholm syndrome," or psychological affinity with their captors.

"Up to now, I'm still a soldier in words, deeds and actions," Fidelino said.

Nemeño said: "I did not become sympathetic with the NPAs because I'm faithful to my profession. This is my chosen profession."

Both captives had grown beards and wore camouflage pants and white shirts marked "POW" (Prisoners of War). They said they were treated well despite being handcuffed most of the time.

Both the government and the National Democratic Front viewed their release as a possible step toward resumption of the off-and-on peace talks.

The NDF earlier this month called for postponement of the talks, scheduled to resume Aug. 24-30 in Oslo, Norway, after the United States renewed its listing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as a foreign "terrorist" organization.

From the turnover site, the two soldiers were driven to another village where they had an emotional reunion with their relatives.

Fidelino's wife, Leah, and his mother-in-law, Erlinda, broke into tears as he embraced them.

For some uneasy moments, Fidelino's 2-year-old daughter, Aliyah Nicole, looked like she did not recognize her bearded father. The child bawled.

"It's the best anniversary gift to us," Leah said. The Fidelinos celebrate their third wedding anniversary on Aug. 25.

Nemeño's brother, Mariano, welcomed him.

Presented to GMA

President Macapagal-Arroyo hailed the release and said peace talks with the rebels must be pursued.

"I thank God for the safety of soldiers and the peace of mind that has been restored to their loved ones," Ms Arroyo said.

"We must continue to push the frontiers of peace through negotiations and confidence building as we strive to heal the wounds of the past and carry our nation forward across uncertain times," she said.

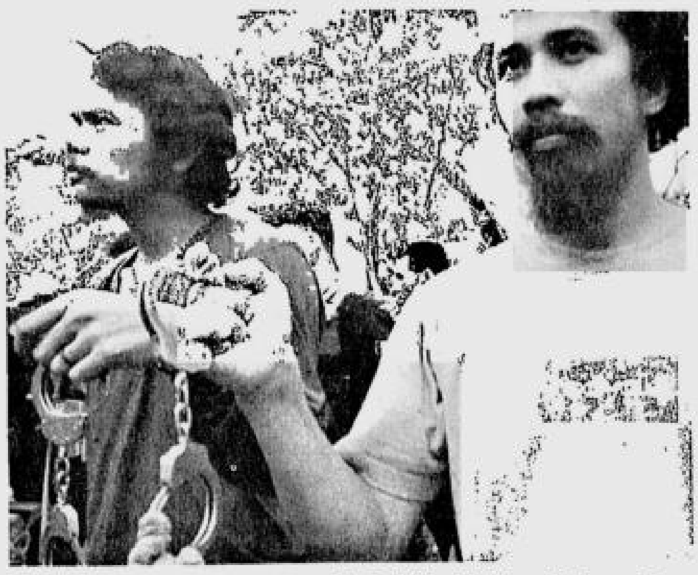
The two soldiers were expected to be presented to Ms Arroyo late last night in Cebu City, where the President was on a visit.

Soldier plays guitar

In a hilltop rebel encampment, before the soldiers were freed, the guerrillas sang revolutionary songs and recited poems on a grass field festooned with red banners to celebrate the release. They butchered a pig for food.

The soldiers thanked the rebels, then sang songs as Nemeño played the guitar.

"They did not get even a pinch from us," said a guerrilla who gave her name as Ka (comrade) Lory.



FREEDOM at last for 1st Lt. Ronaldo Fedekin (right) and Private First Class Ronel Nemeño after their NPA captors in the mountain area of Camarines Sur remove their handcuffs on Wednesday. They were scheduled to be presented to President Arroyo last night in Cebu. AP

At the Legazpi airport, where she arrived at 9 a.m. prior to reuniting with her husband, Leah seemed overcome by emotions.

Leah, 6 months pregnant, admitted that excitement and nervousness gripped her.

Sleepless

Dressed in white T-shirt and black pants, she showed anxiety while preparing for the long travel to Presentacion town in Camarines Sur, where her husband and Nemeño were eventually freed.

On the night before her husband's release yesterday afternoon, Leah said in a cell phone interview with the INQUIRER that she was so excited she couldn't sleep.

"It would be better that we have a long vacation first, since he was away for a long time," she said, when asked what her immediate plans for herself and her husband were.

She had brought her husband several newly pressed shirts and pants and a shaver.

"I have been missing my husband a lot—his kindness, sweetness, humility and strong sense of humor," Leah recalled.

"A joker, my husband jokes a lot. He's so nice and makes friends easily. He's a sweet talker, that was why I fell for him," she added, breaking into laughter.

She said she had visited Bicol only once in her entire life, staying in the area for two days that first time.

"Our second child was 'assembled' here," she cracked.

Girlfriend

It was a different story for 17-year-old Irene Abiog, Nemeño's girlfriend.

While well-wishers, including prominent personalities, crowded around Fidelino's wife, Abiog felt all alone by herself, worrying about her boyfriend.

Abiog, a first year commerce student at the Partido College in Goa, Camarines Sur, casually attended her classes yesterday morning.

She said she had no idea what to do and nobody invited her to come for the release of her boyfriend.

At about 1:30 p.m., the INQUIRER contacted her while she was on her way to Naga City on board a passenger bus. She did not even have any idea where Nemeño would be released—until the INQUIRER texted her the venue.

Abiog said she would just proceed to Legazpi and meet him there before the two soldiers departed for Cebu for their meeting with Ms Arroyo.

In a tense and worried voice, she narrated that she and Nemeño had been sweethearts for almost two years now.

Never lost hope

Leah said she never lost hope that she would see her husband again.

It was on TV, she said, that she heard news about the gun battle in which her husband was captured.

"I did not worry about it. [I did not know] that it was my husband who was captured, until my husband's colleague called my cell phone and told me about the incident. Since then, I kept on crying," she said.

Leah said she had only one chance to talk with her husband while he was captive.

"It was on March 12 and our conversation only lasted for about five minutes. He was telling me that he was all right. But I was very worried, knowing he was in the hands of the NPA," she added.

Updates from Ka Roger

From then on, she would only get updates about her husband from NPA leader Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, who, by then, had already become her textmate.

She said she had to give up her job as a data entry operator in one of the FedEx offices in Manila, where she had worked for about four months.

"I chose my family. Besides, I was experiencing difficulty in my job," Leah said.

Leah said she would not mind if her husband would want to remain in the military.

"Perhaps, it's his destiny that this would happen, so I have accepted the fact even if it is hard for me," she added. *With reports from Niño Jesus Orbeta and Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

No surprises in Cabinet

From page A1

tion; former Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez, justice; former presidential assistant for the Visayas Rene Villa, agrarian reform; incumbent Rep. Joseph Ace Durano (NPC, 5th district, Cebu), tourism.

RPN 9 chair Cerge Remonde was named head of the Government Media Group, which is under the newly set up Office of the Communications Director in Malacañang.

Appointed Communications Director was former PMS head Silvestre Afable III. Former Press Secretary Milton Alingod was named chair of Cocolife and the Radio Television Malacañang.

Former Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Rene Velasco was appointed director general of the Philippine Information Agency with a Cabinet rank.

Three new advisers to the President were also appointed—Francisco Licuanan for Clark-Subic development; Rodolfo del Rosario for new government centers, whose function has yet to be made clear; and Edgardo Pamintuan for constituencies.

Pagdanganan et al.

Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan was named chair and president of the Philippine International Trading Corp.; former Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert will be appointed to an ambassadorial position; former Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco Jr., director general of Tesda (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority); and Imelda Nicolas, secretary general of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

Appointed to various government-owned or -controlled corporations were: Thelmo Cunanan, chair of the Social Security System; Sergio Valencia, chair of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office; Fe Barin, chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission; Eduardo Manalac, president of the Philippine National Oil Corp.; Jose Perez, president of the United Coconut Planters Bank; and Reynaldo David, president of the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Lilia de Lima was named ambassador to Belgium.

"This is just a partial list. Other names will be announced in the next few days," Bunye said.

He said the appointments would take effect as soon as the officials had received their papers and taken their oath of office.

Honored

In a statement issued yesterday, Romulo, a former senator, said: "I am very honored to accept the position of foreign affairs secretary, once occupied with great distinction by such luminaries as Apolinario Mabini, Elpidio Quirino, Emmanuel Pelaez, Carlos P. Romulo, Raul Manglapus and Blas F. Ople.

"In the conduct of foreign policy, my guidepost and lodestar is no less than the Constitution, which orders 'the state to pursue an independent foreign policy with its paramount consideration being national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest and the right to self-determination'."

Informed sources told the INQUIRER last week that Romulo had decided to quit as "Little President" and accept the foreign affairs portfolio because he was "tired of the wheeling and dealing in Malacañang" and of being used as a "scapegoat" in the quarrels of power blocs and lobbyists for government appointments.

The sources said that Ermita would only serve as executive secretary for a short period, and that Tiglao, Ms Arroyo's chief of staff, would eventually take over.

Protecting GMA's votes

Gonzalez, who had just ended his term as a representative of Iloilo, earlier confirmed that he was expecting to be appointed to the Department of Justice.

"Indicators are it is the DOJ, but it is not final until it is there. I don't want to preempt the President," he said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER, adding that he and Ms Arroyo talked about the matter two weeks ago.

Gonzalez also said the post was first offered to him last December. As early as then, he said, he was ready to resign from the 12th Congress to serve at the DOJ, but that Ms Arroyo had prevailed on him to complete his last term so that he could take part in the congressional canvassing of the results of the May presidential election.

"The President told me she wanted me to protect her votes," he said.

Gonzalez is considered one of the staunchest allies of Ms Arroyo in Iloilo City, along with Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Concession to Cebu

Congressman Durano—on his third and last term in Congress—earlier told reporters that he and the President talked about his appointment to the DOT when she "inaugurated" Malacañang in the South last month.

He said he was ready to forego his elective post because he was bored with congressional work.

The tourism portfolio was reportedly one of the concessions that Cebuanos wanted in return for the overwhelming support of the city and the province for Ms Arroyo in the presidential election.

Ms Arroyo has been showering Cebu with favors, including setting up Malacañang in the South there and moving the DOT head office from Manila to the Queen City of the South.

Durano, who grew up in the United States, has no concrete background in tourism or marketing apart from his being vice chair of the House committee on tourism during the 12th Congress.

He got into politics when he ran for congressman in 1998 to replace his father, Ramonito III, who was on his third and last term. The father is now mayor of Danao City, the bailiwick of the Duranos.

Drilon protégé

Villa, the newly appointed secretary of agrarian reform , is a known protégé of Senate President Drilon.

Currently also Cabinet Officer for Regional Development in Western Visayas, he is a product of the University of the Philippines College of Law, and was presidential assistant for Western Visayas for five years.

Sources said that if Villa bagged the appointment, chances were that he would simultaneously serve as CORD-Western Visayas, and agrarian reform secretary.

Drilon and Sen. Mar Roxas served in the same capacity when they were justice and trade secretary, respectively.

The 'dizzy group'

As for Defensor, Alingod and Remonde, they were seen together in a hotel yesterday mulling over their yet uncertain fate.

"*Grupong hilo* (The Dizzy Group)" was how Defensor called themselves, who all served in Ms Arroyo's election. *With reports from Nestor Burgos, Raj Padilla and Connie Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

House panel in CA pressed President on appointments

By Carlito Pablo

THE CHAIR and members of the House panel to the Commission on Appointments yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to end the guessing game and immediately appoint the new officials in her Cabinet.

The lawmakers led by House contingent chair Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) said that the "disclosure of the nominees will ease the uncertainty on the leadership of the various departments and agencies."

Representatives Aurelio Umali (Lakas, Nueva Ecija) and Marcelino Libanan (NPC, Eastern Samar), both members of the CA, said that the designation of new Cabinet members will also "pave the way for the undertaking of decisive and necessary action to address pressing socio-economic issues."

There has been a constant stream of speculation on the make-up of President Arroyo's new Cabinet.

Pichay said: "We assure assure the people that in partnership with the Senate contingent to the CA, we will be impartial in choosing qualified public servants without political fear or favor."

In a statement, Houe Majority Floor Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said that except for two more slots, the House panel to the CA has been fully reorganized.

The other members of the panel are Lakas Reps. Clavel Martinez (Cebu); Prospero Amatong (Compostela Valley); Reps. Manuel Ortega (La Union) and Jurdin Jesus Romualdo (Camiguin) of the Nationalist People's Coalition; Reps. Rafael Nantes (Quezon) and Antonino Roman (Bataan); and opposition Rep. Imee Marcos (KBL, Ilocos Norte).

Corrections

IN THE Aug. 17 issue, a Metro story on Page A15—"Pasig siege suspects face raps"—the sentence "Police said the group used an attack helicopter and an armored personnel carrier on top of at least 50 fully armed officers to subdue the group of Bernardito Balaga, Ediberto Bestil, Edito Mahinay, Romer Balorio, Manolo Eva, Juanito Casanova, Rey Sarmiento, Francisco Sedigo and Crisanto Escuandro," should have read "Police said they used an attack helicopter and an armored personnel carrier on top of at least 50 fully armed officers to subdue the group of Bernardito Balaga, Ediberto Bestil, Edito Mahinay, Romer Balorio, Manolo Eva, Juanito Casanova, Rey Sarmiento, Francisco Sedigo and Crisanto Escuandro."

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the caption of a front-page photo misstated the location of the staging of the Kadayawan sa Dabaw festival. The staging was held on the campus of the Centro Escolar University in Manila—not the streets of Davao City.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the front-page banner story—"Tax credit row imperils revenue bills"—erroneously identified one of the accused in the tax credit scam as businessman Felix Chingkoe. The correct name of the accused is Faustino Chingkoe, the older brother of Felix. In fact, the younger Chingkoe is helping government prosecute the P5.3-billion tax credit scam case by providing documents and standing as witness against his brother.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Bulacan tilapia, bangus, hito going global in 2005

From page A1

planning to ship out its first batch of fillets and other fish products early in 2005 to take advantage of the growing demand for the stuff abroad, according to Alvin Gimelo, its general manager.

Gimelo said processed fish could be the alternative to the canned tuna long available in the market.

He said the monthly demand for processed fish in Hong Kong, the United States, Australia, France, the United Kingdom and Malaysia was reaching more than 200 metric tons, and expressed confidence that the Philippines could help fill the demand.

A subsidiary of Feed Mix Nutrition Inc., the country's top manufacturer of aquaculture and other animal feeds, Fisher Farms has come up with at least 16 variants of processed tilapia, eight of bangus and two of hito.

The list is a veritable menu.

Tilapia may be had for *sinigang* (in sour broth) and for broiling and frying; filleted, smoked or breaded; and as longaniza (sausage), siomai (dumpling), balls, and spring rolls.

The bangus cuts come in *sinigang, daing* (cut and dried), prito (fried), *paksiw* (in vinegar), and *inihaw* (grilled). There's the choice bangus belly, or the smoked boneless bangus.

And for hito, consumers may try it *adobo* (in soy sauce, vinegar and garlic) or *inihaw*.

World's top 7 suppliers

With the export and sale of these products, the Philippines can make it to the world's top seven fish fillet suppliers, after Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Canada, the Faeroe Islands (part of Denmark) and China, according to Gimelo's projections.

Gimelo said Iceland was supplying the international market with 21.3 percent of fillet products.

The Philippines can provide at least 6.3 percent (or 4,368 metric tons) of the international supply when Fisher Farms starts exporting its products, he said.

At present, Fisher Farms' 26 processed fish products are distributed through Rustan's and Isetann supermarkets at P40 per pack of 200 grams, Gimelo said.

He said marketing efforts were underway to tap other supermarkets, groceries, hotels and fast food chains.

The company gets its supply of tilapia from Candaba, Pampanga, and Batangas; bangus from Hagonoy, Bulacan, and Dagupan City; and hito from Bulacan.

Gimelo said consumers could soon look forward to such delights as tilapia in teriyaki marinade, hot and spicy oil, barbecue marinade, or adobo marinade; "luncheon fish," fish loaf and nuggets; tilapia burger; fresh native tilapia sausage; and tilapia and bangus with tausi (black beans).

Operations

Fisher Farms started processing operations and product marketing in the last quarter of 2003.

Gimelo said its processing plant was a product of the desire and long-term program of Feed Mix Nutrition Inc., its mother company, to produce high-quality native tilapia and other fish.

Feed Mix maintains its own tilapia hatchery. The fish grown there is of the same type grown in fishponds in Batangas and in Candaba, Gimelo said.

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Logistics bases in RP key to US plan

THE UNITED States military commitment to Asia is undergoing a profound change which will have a direct impact on the security of the entire region, analysts and diplomats say.

In the coming years, tens of thousands of US troops will be withdrawn from Europe and Asia as part of the biggest realignment of US military might since the end of the Korean War, 51 years ago.

The reduced troop numbers will make US military power in the region smaller but deadlier, relying on rapid deployment and sophisticated air and naval power, analysts say.

Renato de Castro, who teaches international studies at De La Salle University, said: "The days of big armies are over.

"US thinking today is less on massive troop deployment but rather on extending its military clout via the forward basing of air and sea power and logistics facilities for the rapid deployment of small numbers of highly trained troops.

"The new thinking will rely heavily on strong alliances with allies, access to facilities and training." The United States has yet to reveal full details of its realignment of troops in Asia, although it has announced plans to reduce the 37,500-strong force in South Korea by a third. It is thought 47,000 US troops will remain at bases in Japan.

De Castro said the new US strategy calls for what US defense planners call "Lily Pads" or "Warm Bases"—small lightly-staffed facilities which can be used as jumping-off points in a crisis.

These facilities will be linked to a few large, strategically located, heavy infrastructure bases likely to be in Japan, Australia and Singapore.

"In Asia, these heavy infrastructure bases would include the naval base in Yokosuka in Japan and the airbase in Misawa," De Castro said.

"Singapore is already being used as a heavy infrastructure base as it has a major ship repair facility which can handle aircraft carriers.

"At the southern end, you have Australia which is considered as one of America's closest allies in Asia and has, over the years, developed a number of military bases in the north west of the country." The United States has been developing a series of logistic facilities in the Philippines following the closure of its bases, notably the Clark airbase in Central Luzon and the deep water naval facility at Subic Bay.

In General Santos City, the United States, through air programmes, has developed a deepwater port and a modern airport which are connected by one of the best roads in the Philippines.

At Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, the airport has been upgraded and runway strengthened to take C-130 transport aircraft.

"What military planners want is to be able to deploy small units at short notice to attack terrorist groups or rogue states that pose a threat to US security," said De Castro.

Regional security analysts say technological advances are the biggest factors allowing the United States to undertake its military reforms while retaining the same effective presence in Asia.

As a result, the US Pacific island of Guam will play an increasingly important role in projecting US military power in Asia. Strike bombers, cruise-missile submarines and a new aircraft carrier group based at the island would be capable of striking across the region. *AFP*

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De Venecia . . .

From page A1

jority" in the House of Representatives, dominated by the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, effectively crushing plots to unseat Speaker Jose de Venecia from his post.

An official statement released by the Lakas camp said the new coalition majority was now composed of Lakas, Nationalist People's Coalition, Liberal Party, Nacionalista Party, Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, Aksyon Demokratiko, Reporma and majority of the party-list representatives.

De Venecia, who is Lakas president, said the majority coalition would continue to seek out Kampi's support "because we have urgent tasks in Congress ... [for instance, approving] revenue measures."

In the same statement, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said Kampi, formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo when she ran for vice president in 1998, would still be considered an administration party and, therefore, "our allies."

Kampi was one of two parties earlier perceived to be challenging De Venecia's election to a fourth term as Speaker.

The other disgruntled group, the Liberal Party, was declared a Lakas ally.

Eventually, Ms Arroyo personally endorsed De Venecia before the 13th Congress opened last month.

Reality check?

But Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte) did not sound as conciliatory. Kampi had been "effectively isolated," he said, and "should stop dangling the numbers game" especially "with this reality check."

Nograles said the realignment was triggered by the LP's decision to break away from Kampi.

This provoked a howl of protest.

In a separate interview, Rep. Abraham Mitra (LP, Palawan) said the party was, in fact, "looking forward to a long-term relationship with Kampi. It is evident that Lakas is driving a wedge between us."

Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon (LP, Muntinlupa) admitted there were "minor issues that would have to be resolved. "[But the] relationship between the two parties is not strained to the point of breaking up."

Opposition bloc?

Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo (Kampi, Negros Occidental), a presidential brother-in-law, wondered if his party was now deemed part of the opposition bloc: "Are they (Lakas) saying that we are now in the minority?"

Fine, Kampi spokesperson Rep. Anthony Miranda (Isabela) said. If Lakas sidelines them, they will join the opposition. "I guess the minority will always welcome us."

So is this war of honorables over or what?

With Kampi out of the coalition, Rep. Imee Marcos (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, 2nd district, Ilocos Norte) said moves to unseat De Venecia have fizzled out.

No choice

Marcos said that the group seeking his ouster realized "that Malacañang could not handle him as an adversary."

The group "got burned," Marcos said. She did not give names.

The scheme had banked heavily on party-raiding, Marcos said, but the plotters failed to secure a "critical mass" for a viable showdown. "They had no choice but to sound the retreat."

And so, she concluded, the group would have to scrounge, along with everyone else, for positions of influence in the House.

De Venecia earlier vowed to stay in his post, regardless of how the four-week-old squabbling for committee chairmanships turned out.

"His allies bet correctly that he had enough trump cards to make people in the Palace squirm in discomfort," Marcos added.

Plot uncovered prematurely

The plotters had to be "practical" after the scheme was uncovered "prematurely," she said. Now they're singing a different tune, acknowledging that they needed De Venecia's cooperation.

Certainly, Marcos pointed out, recent events trimmed the Speaker's following, but the outcome merely affirmed his control over the chamber.

"Launching a coup against JDV at this time would be a hard-sell," she said. "The masterminds would have to promise the moon and the stars. And if it succeeded, they would then have to contend with De Venecia in the opposition. That would be one big headache."

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PNP aims sight at 'loose' guns

From page A1

Amnesty program

Cacdac said the PNP was looking into the possibility of getting those estimated 320,995 firearms registered through an amnesty program, primarily to keep their owners from using them in criminal activities. The earlier amnesty program ended last month and raised around P11 million for the PNP, he said.

By having the other batch of 200,000 guns registered, the PNP estimates to generate at least P300 million, assuming that each firearm is a .45 cal. pistol, said Supt. Robert Po, FED chief for operations. Renewing the license for a .45 cal. pistol would cost P1,438 under the revised rates.

80-20 sharing

The rates for other firearms are—a high powered rifle or submachine gun, P2,258; a 9-mm pistol, P1,138; a shotgun, P1,078, and a .22 cal. rifle, P1,018.

Po said income generated by the CSG would be important for the government since a huge part of the total collection would go to the National Treasury, with only 20 percent going to the PNP for its operations.

Last year, the PNP collected P64,591,254 from the renewal of gun licenses, including applications for permit to carry firearms outside of residences, FED records showed.

Po said the FED would most probably not raise as much this year, considering that only P32,419,055 had been collected as of last month. That is because this year is an "odd year" since a gun license expires every two years, he said.

Aggressive campaign

"Actually, it's very hard to make projections because you won't know how much you'll earn in any given year," Cacdac told the INQUIRER. "But our goal is to have better collections every year."

With the government looking for just about any source for extra income, the PNP decided to aggressively pursue all gun owners with expired licenses.

It plans to send individual letters, complete with registration forms, to each owner of the 200,000 guns with expired licenses.

Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, the head of the CSG, said doing this would cost the PNP at least P2 million alone, with stamps pegged at P10 each.

To limit the costs, Caringal decided that PNP regional and provincial offices should themselves send the letters to gun owners.

Satellite Offices

Next week, a gun license express renewal office will be opened in Cebu, servicing gun owners in the Visayas.

A similar office will open in Davao next month for Mindanao gun owners.

By putting up satellite offices in Cebu and Davao, the PNP would ease the burden on gun owners outside of Luzon, who in the past had to travel all the way to Camp Crame just to have their licenses renewed, Cacdac said.

Probe set on bungling of tax credit fraud cases

From page A1

due them.

Asked whether Customs Deputy Commissioner Gil Valera would be investigated, Bonoan replied: "He's one of them."

Valera faces probe

Valera, head of the BOC revenue collection and monitoring group, is being accused of bungling the cases in exchange for some favors.

"If in the process of investigation we prove that there is indeed negligence, then we will make the necessary legal actions," Bonoan said.

Valera earlier denied that the BOC bungled the cases, saying some of the cases were dismissed because of technicalities. He said court summons did not reach the suspects, who used fictitious addresses.

But sources said that Valera had the tendency to handle the prosecution work almost single handedly, and that he did not allow other government officials to be involved in the cases.

"Amatong really wants this thing investigated. She was concerned enough that people in the BOC did not succeed in prosecuting the cases," Bonoan said.

Chingkoe group

The cases involve the companies owned by Faustino Chingkoe and Melchor Tan, which account for the bulk of the estimated P5.3 billion in lost taxes due to the tax credit certificate (TCC) scam in the 1990s.

Bonoan said Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio had also requested that the RIPS investigate the alleged bungling of cases. Villa-Ignacio is leading the team prosecuting before the Sandiganbayan finance officials linked to the Chingkoe group of companies.

Bonoan, who only has 30 people under the RIPS, had asked the help of the Department of Justice to provide him with prosecutors to "analyze the process" that caused the government to lose the cases.

"We are going to find out if they were diligent in prosecuting the cases," he said.

Since its creation last year, the RIPS has charged several officials with graft in the Office of the Ombudsman, resulting in their dismissal and suspension from service.

He said the DOJ could assist in assessing whether the procedures taken by the BOC were proper.

Team system

Bonoan said the RIPS would also tap the help of the Special Presidential Task Force 156 in acquiring documents of the cases. But he said RIPS' investigation would be separate from any inquiry that the task force may conduct.

Task Force 156 Executive Director Alan Ventura earlier said his office was looking at investigating the BOC's prosecution of the dismissed tax fraud cases.

The task force ordered the BOC and the BIR to file the necessary judicial remedies and appeals to revive or reinstate the dismissed collection cases.

At a meeting called by the task force, alternate chair Inocencio P. Ferrer Jr. also instructed the two agencies to assign more lawyers under a "team system" to ensure that lawyers are available to monitor the collection cases.

Ferrer, a finance undersecretary, advised both the BIR and BOC to seek the assistance of the Office of the Solicitor General in the litigation of the collection cases.

The role of the task force is limited to the investigation of the parties involved in the tax credit scam and to assisting the BOC and the BIR in the litigation of the collection cases.

Unfair to workers

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines yesterday urged Malacañang to go after revenue officials responsible for the dismissal of a string of tax cases.

The TUCP said the dismissal was unfair to workers who religiously pay taxes.

"The dismissals speak volumes of how some of our tax officials mishandle revenue collection. There is something fishy here. Its either the officials are negligent, ignorant or guilty of monkey business," the TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said in a statement.

Malacañang is enlisting the help of Congress in going after big-time tax evaders and their co-conspirators in government.

"The administration looks forward to a team-up with Congress in this campaign, with the end view of exposing the culprits and plugging the loopholes in the law," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

Malacañang apparently wanted the help of Congress in "investigating, exposing and prosecuting allegations of corruption or under-the-table dealings," Bunye said. *With a report from Martin P. Marfil and Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

Builder accuses Neda of railroading North Rail

From page A1

project while being "hyper-critical" of the Subic-Clark expressway project.

Consunji said Neri had been making a lot of noise to bid out anew the Subic-Clark project to determine the least cost and best funding package for the expressway. He said it was but fair that Neri adopt the same standards for the North Rail deal.

The businessman noted that while both projects would be funded from tied loans, only the expressway project was bid out while the railway project was given to the China Eximbank on a silver platter.

Loans are called tied when the lending country requires that the money be used to buy equipment and machinery from it.

The Chinese government, through its Export Import Bank, is extending a $395-million loan to the government for the project (the balance of $108 million will be obtained from commercial banks).

Original proponent

DMCI, along with Metro Pacific Corp. and the Spanish railway group CAF (Construcciones y Auxiliares de Ferrocariles), is the original proponent of the North Rail project. In 1996, it offered to build a 90-km high-speed rail transit from Fort Bonifacio to Clark airport for $2 billion under a build operate and transfer scheme.

The project did not take off because of the huge funding requirement. It was revived last year when Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. brokered the entry of the Chinese government, which agreed to build a shorter and scaled-down version.

The North Rail project was approved by the Neda Investment Coordinating Committee and the China Eximbank loan was signed within weeks of each other.

De Venecia and Neri are seen as close allies as the latter had worked as chief of the Congressional Planning Budget Office in the House of Representatives before he accepted the Neda post.

De Venecia has been aggressively pushing China Eximbank as the financier of the railway projects including the 400-km South Manila Commuter Railway System, which is estimated to cost $1 billion.

More borrowing

Malacañang has stood pat on the North Rail project, challenging critics to come forward with their own cost estimates. Businessmen had urged Ms Arroyo to go slow on the North Rail project because it would mean more borrowings for the heavily indebted government. In addition, they claimed that the project lacked transparency.

In defending the project, Neri said it would not cost nearly P1 billion per kilometer because the railway component would only amount to $244.74 million or less than P500 million per kilometer.

Neri revealed that more than half or $258.26 million would be spent for relocation of squatters, taxes, and "project management funds" for the government support team. Neri has not returned the INQUIRER's calls.

NERI: "Eerily silent" on railway project but noisy on Subic-Clark rebidding.

Too high

Consunji also wanted to know whether the terms offered by the China Eximbank—20-year repayment at 3 percent per annum—were the best that the government could obtain.

Other sources of official development assistance loans have longer repayment terms and lower interest rates, according to Consunji. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), for instance, has loans of up to 40 years at an interest rate of 0.67 percent.

"Unless Neda puts the project through a bidding, we will never know whether its price is too high or too low. Who knows, China Eximbank might have the best terms possible in a bidding?" Consunji said.

Not yet reimbursed

He said the North Rail project remained a "sound" concept eight years after it was proposed. "A rail-based urban transport system is important to Metro Manila's growth because no major city in the world has developed with only a road-based transport system," he said.

DMCI has yet to be reimbursed of its P300-million investment in the North Rail project while its partners—Metro Pacific (P250 million) and CAF (P100 million)—have long settled their collectibles from the government.

UE graduate tops medical . . .

From page A1

Drilon, UP Manila; Cristina V. Jaring, UST; Irene P. Villanueva, UST.

Adeloisa H. Dacayanan, UP Manila; Sherry May D. Imperio, UST; Elmer P. Samoy, Manila Central University-Caloocan City; Frederick Allen L. Fuentes, UST; Rener de los Santos Canilang, MCU Caloocan; Gerome V. Escota, UP Manila; Carlo Martin H. Garcia, UP Manila.

Antonette B. Climaco, UST; Angelito C. Reyes Jr, PLM; Floyd V. Villarin, Angeles University Foundation; Mary Clarisse L. Kilayko, UP Manila; Beatrice Lourdes Josefina P. Concepcion, UP Manila; Christine G. Masamayor, UP Manila.

John Paul B. Pua, UST; Jewel de Leon Salvador, UP Manila; Felice Katrina C. Trio, UP Manila; Kathleen Michelle N. Young, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas Health Science Campus; Karen Beatrice S. Ching, UP Manila; Vanessa Joyce M. Evardone, Southwestern University-College of Medicine.

Joyce Christina F. Ibe, UST; Marc James de los Santos, UP Manila; Ria Arlina C. Calata, UST; Zarah Dulce F. Lucas, DLSU-DHSC; Gerby dela Peña Coronel, UST; Anthony F. Felipe, UST; Maria Clariza M. Santos, UP Manila; Jean D. Alcover, UP Manila; Jason A. Galicia, PLM.

Philip Gregory T. Ong, SLCM; Wendy C. Sarmiento, UP Manila; Ianthe A. Arboleda, UP Manila; Jesus Bryan G. Cepedoza, Cebu Institute of Medicine; Maria Margarita O. Florentino, UP Manila; Ronald S. Lotoc, UP Manila; Andre Angelo G. Tanque, UST.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Last Sunday, August 15, 2004, the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) published a Notice pertaining to a Preliminary Order dated August 12, 2004 issued by its Office of Legal Affairs commanding SOLID CEMENT CORPORATION to "CEASE and DESIST from selling, distributing, delivering and disposing of ISLAND CEMENT, or any brand manufactured by the SOLID CEMENT plant in Antipolo, Rizal, in bulk and in bags, to customers, dealers, and distributors, including, but not limited to, batching plants and hardware outlets/stores."

While the Notice was addressed to "Distributors and Retailers of Island (Portland) Cement manufactured by Cemex Phils., Inc./Solid Cement Corp. (Antipolo)", the management of SOLID CEMENT wishes to clarify that the Cease and Desist Order is addressed only to SOLID CEMENT. The Cease and Desist Order is preliminary in nature and was issued without a finding of any violation on the part of SOLID CEMENT. SOLID CEMENT has already questioned the said Cease and Desist Order before the Court of Appeals for being in violation of DTI's own rules and for having been issued with grave abuse of discretion.

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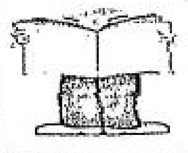
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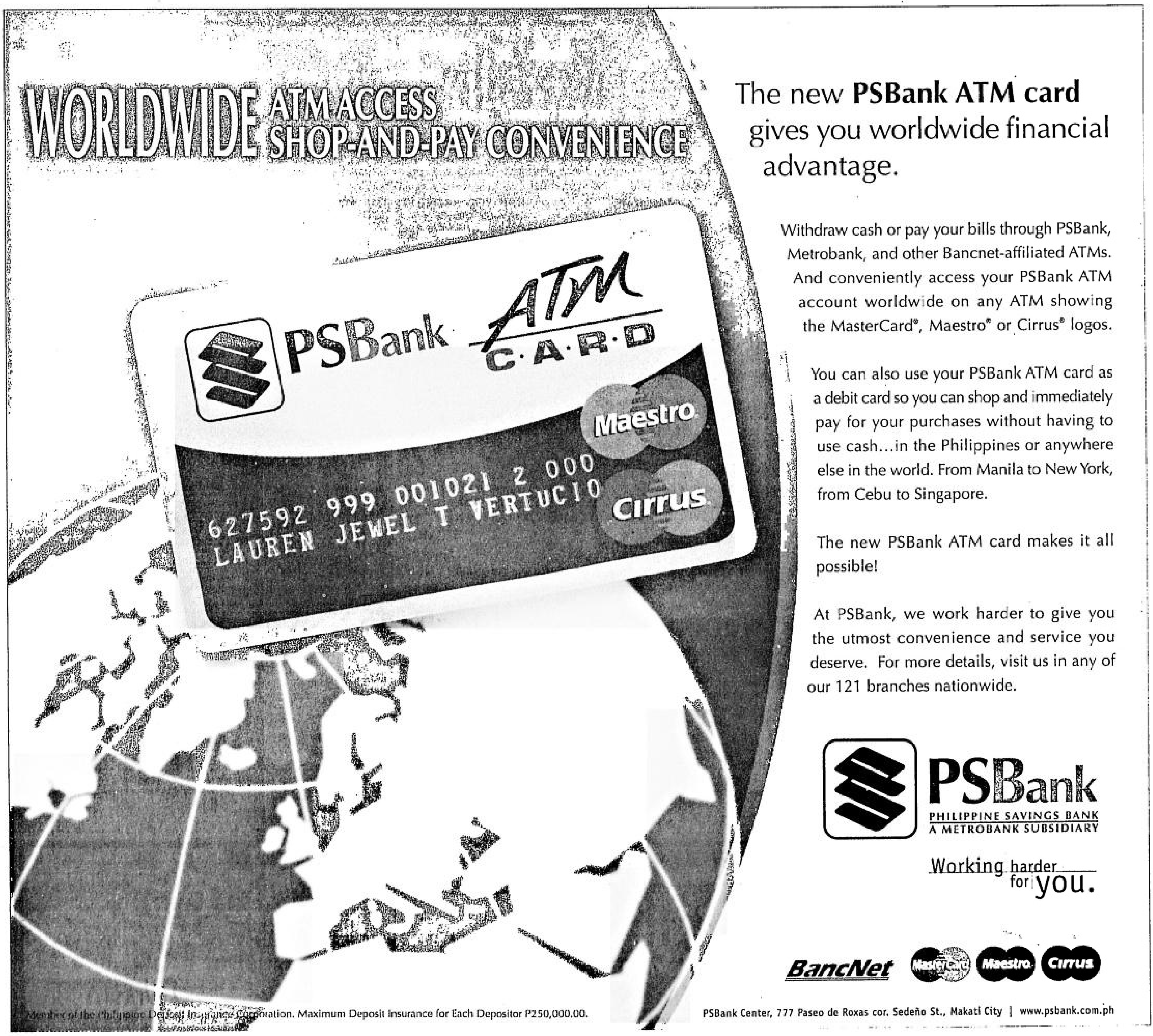
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Mission to end fighting in Najaf fails

BAGHDAD—Delegates began voting Wednesday for members of the new Iraqi National Council, but said they would not send another delegation to the holy city of Najaf after a failed mission to end fighting nearly two weeks of fighting there between US forces and Shiite militants.

Amid the clashes, an eight-member delegation from the conference flew Tuesday to Najaf to convince Moqtada Sadr to abandon his uprising. The delegation met the firebrand cleric's aides, but Sadr himself failed to show up to meet them.

"If there were 'anyone sympathizing with him in the past, there will be none from now on because of this stand," delegate Abdul-Halim al-Ruhaimi said Wednesday.

Sadr aide Ahmed al-Shaibany said the cleric did not show because of the "heavy shelling from the planes and tanks of the US forces."

Sporadic gunfire and explosions were heard in Najaf again on Wednesday as clashes continued. Fighting in Najaf has killed six people and wounded 23 others since Tuesday morning, Hussein Hadi of Najaf General Hospital, said Wednesday.

In Baghdad, a mortar round hit the roof of Iraq's foreign ministry building Wednesday afternoon, causing no damage or injuries, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said.

The blast shook the convention center where the National Conference was being held inside the heavily fortified Green Zone enclave, which is home to Iraqi government offices and the US Embassy. Zebari said he believed the Green Zone was the target.

The Iraqi National Conference, a gathering of more than 1,000 religious, political and civic leaders, was extended a fourth day into Wednesday because of disagreements over how to elect a council that is to act as a watchdog over the interim government until elections in January.

The fighting in Najaf, especially near the revered Imam Ali shrine, where Sadr's militants are holed up, has angered many among the country's majority Shiite population and cast a pall over the conference, which had been intended to project an image of amity and inclusiveness on the road to democracy.

The conference decided to send an emergency peace delegation to Najaf on Tuesday to try to solve the crisis.

A top conference official said Wednesday the delegation would not return to Najaf.

"These delegates will not go again, they presented their proposal, the ball is now in his (Sadr's) court," the official said on condition of anonymity. He said a new delegation could go to Najaf from the 100-member council after it is established.

The delegation's peace initiative demanded that Sadr's Mahdi Army militia disarm, leave the Imam Ali shrine and become a political group in exchange for amnesty. *AP*

US Army soldiers fight from a fortified position near the cemetery in Najaf, Iraq, on Aug. 17. AP

Kerry warns troop pullout to impair US security

CINCINNATI—John Kerry says President George W. Bush's plans to recall as many as 70,000 troops from Cold War-era bases in Europe and Asia could impair America's security, particularly in the war against terror.

In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Wednesday, the US senator and Democratic presidential candidate was to argue that Bush's policy would undermine relations with US allies and dangerously reduce forces at a time when the nation is fighting the al-Qaida terrorist network in 60 countries across the globe, according to a senior campaign official familiar with discussions about the speech.

Bush announced his redeployment plan on Monday before an earlier session of the same convention of the VFW, a 'conservative group meeting in a Republican-leaning city. Bush also used his appearance before the veterans to criticize Kerry for saying he plans to reduce the number of US troops in Iraq during his first six months in office.

With voters focused on the war on terror, the VFW convention was the perfect backdrop for both candidates to tout their war plans. The convention was set in Ohio, one of the most hotly contested battleground states ahead of the November vote, with a live audience being targeted by both campaigns.

Although veterans lean Republican, Kerry also is seeking their support in this election. Kerry touts his own service in the Vietnam War as a mutual connection and is even bucking the tradition of suspending campaigning during the opposing party's national convention to speak to the American Legion. *AP*

Mysterious attack kills 5 militants in Gaza City

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Israel set off a mysterious explosion in an olive grove near the house of a senior Hamas activist early Wednesday, killing five Palestinians—at least four of them militants—and wounding seven.

The main target of the attack, Hamas activist Ahmed Jabari, escaped with light injuries, but one of Jabari's adult sons was among those killed, Hamas said.

The Israeli military said Jabari was targeted in an operation by the Air Force, but provided no details. In the past four years of fighting, Israel has carried out scores of targeted attacks on militants, firing missiles from aircraft.

However, Palestinian witnesses said they saw no helicopters or fighter planes at the time of Wednesday's explosion.

Jabari's neighbors said that before the blast, they spotted an Israeli drone—an unmanned aircraft used for observation—in the area.

A neighbor, Moussa Bakroun, 44, said he was in his garden when he heard the blast. "We heard the sound of screaming from the Jabari olive grove across the street," he said. "We saw human body parts everywhere, and a hole in the ground."

Bakroun said he had heard a drone overhead for some time before the blast.

Palestinian security officials at the site said they could not determine the cause of the blast. *AP*

Arafat admits 'mistakes,' vows reforms

RAMALLAH, West Bank—In a rare admission of wrongdoing, Yasser Arafat said Wednesday that he has made "mistakes" and promised to correct them.

The veteran Palestinian leader issued his plea for reform of the Palestinian Authority in an address to lawmakers at his battered headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Arafat has been under growing pressure internationally and from critics at home to implement reforms in the authority, which is widely accused of corruption and ineffectiveness.

"We have to be brave enough to admit mistakes," Arafat said. "We fortify our commitment to correct those mistakes."

During the speech, Arafat was vague about the errors he believes he has made, but called for a "comprehensive workshop of reforms."

"It's true there were wrongs and unacceptable practices by me and many others. Even the prophets commit mistakes," Arafat said.

"There were wrong practices in some institutions, and some misused their positions. There were not enough efforts to strengthen the rule of law, the independence of the judicial institutions... Be we have begun measures to solve this."

Arafat called for the greater inclusion of women and young leaders into Palestinian politics. "We must open the doors wide for our young generation to seize the opportunity to serve our people," he said.

Despite growing criticism, Arafat has refused to relinquish his powers, particularly his control over the myriad and rival Palestinian security services.

Arafat's appointment last month of a relative to a senior security position in the Gaza Strip sparked violent protests and was followed by a wave of kidnappings. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

African leaders discuss peace, massacre

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania—African leaders gathered Wednesday to ratify controversial power-sharing arrangements between minority Tutsis and the Hutu majority in Burundi as well as discuss a massacre of at least 160 refugees at a UN camp. Burundi and Rwanda on Tuesday threatened to send troops into neighboring Congo to hunt down militiamen who attacked the Burundian refugee camp on Friday from bases in eastern Congo. The Burundian Army chief accused Congolese soldiers of also participating in the massacre. *AP*

Legal experts defend Milosevic

UNITED NATIONS—Ninety legal experts from 17 countries urged the United Nations to allow former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to continue defending himself against war crimes charges, warning that imposing a defense lawyer against his wishes would violate international law. The jurists, law professors and international criminal lawyers—including former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark and French lawyer Jacques Verges—said in a petition to Secretary General Kofi Annan, the General Assembly and the Security Council that even if Milosevic had heart trouble he still had the right to defend himself. "Illness does not destroy his right to defend himself in person," Clark told a news conference Tuesday at the UN Correspondents Association. *AP*

Japan developing flying robot

TOKYO—Seiko Epson Corp. is developing a flying robot that looks like a miniature helicopter that its makers hope will be used for security, disaster rescue and space exploration. Dubbed the Micro Flying Robot, the 12.3-gram, 85-mm machine, shown to reporters Wednesday, follows a flight-route program sent from a computer using Bluetooth wireless technology. On board is a 32-bit microcontroller, a super-thin motor, a digital camera that sends blurry images and a tiny gyro-sensor that weighs less than one-tenth of a gram. The company said the mini gyro-sensor, a stabilizing device, may be used for digital cameras and camera-equipped cell phones as soon as this year to prevent blurred images. *AP*

UN warns of skyrocketing food prices in N. Korea

BEIJING—The collapse of North Korea's economy has caused food prices there to skyrocket and created new groups of people who can't afford to buy what they need to live, the UN World Food Program said Wednesday.

While the UN agency now has enough food for its distribution projects, many in North Korea are still hungry, said Richard Ragan, the WFP's country director based in Pyongyang.

"What you've got is a chronic problem," he told reporters at a briefing in Beijing. North Korea is "chronically short of food."

Starting next month, the World Food Program will have enough food to feed its target of 6.5 million people for the rest of the year and beyond, following new shipments from Japan, the United States and Russia among other countries, he said.

That's a sharp shift from earlier this year, when the agency had to cut food aid to more than 4 million people because donations from abroad weren't coming in, he said.

But the agency is already working to line up foreign food aid for next year, he added. "We kind of live hand to mouth."

Further, a huge percentage of North Korea's 20 million people remain hungry, he said.

"They don't produce enough food to feed everyone," he said. "That's a given."

The market price for food is shooting higher as the country experiments with capitalism following the collapse of its government-driven economy, he said.

Rice has surged to 700 won per kilogram compared to 130 won per kilogram last year, while the average wage has stayed steady at just 2,000 won a month, he said.

North Korea's won trades at an official rate of about 160 won per euro (130 won per US dollar) and unofficially at about 2,000 won per euro (1,600 won per US dollar), he said.

Since the government's food rations aren't enough to live on, "people are being forced to go into the market sector," Ragan said. "As the economy shifts, there are winners and losers."

Among the winners, more people are now allowed to make money, whether it's by binding brooms or making straw mats or selling charcoal, he said. *AP*

Maoist guerrillas blockade Nepal capital

KATMANDU—The Nepali capital was largely cut off from the rest of the country Wednesday after communist rebels threatened to attack any vehicles traveling on main roads, in a virtual blockade of Katmandu to press their demands to release jailed guerrillas.

Roads leading out of the capital were deserted, and the only way in or out for most travelers was by air, though few in this impoverished nation can afford to fly. At the city's main bus station, hundreds of people were stranded with no vehicles leaving the city.

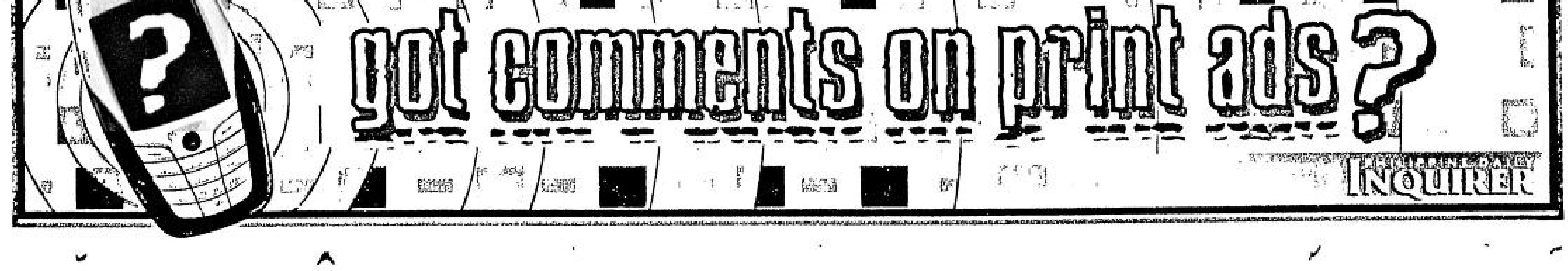
There were no reports of rebels setting up barricades on the roads, but the insurgents were believed to be monitoring them and drivers feared they would be attacked if they used them.

The rebels said last week that they would attack vehicles for an indefinite period from Wednesday to pressure the government to immediately release jailed guerrillas.

The government promised to provide security to travelers on the roads, but their assurance appeared to mean little to the public.

Police officers based in posts along the roads said by phone that there had been no traffic Wednesday.

During similar blockades in the past, dozens of trucks and buses that defied the rebel order were attacked and burned. *AP*



US ELECTIONS

How would Jesus vote?

AUSTIN, Texas—Just a few miles from Texas office where US President George W. Bush served as state governor, a panel of religious experts weighed a question with relevance to many people of faith: How would Jesus vote?

It's a complex topic that can't be boiled down to simple political terms, said religious leaders who attended a Texas Faith Network conference in Austin on Tuesday.

James C. Moore, co-author of a book on Bush's presidency, drew laughter and applause when he offered his view to the moderate to left-leaning crowd of about 250 clergy and lay leaders.

"If ever there were a bleeding-heart liberal, it was Jesus Christ," Moore said at Congregation Agudas Achim synagogue. "I think the carpenter from Galilee was the original Democrat."

As the November presidential election nears, many at the conference voiced concerns that the conservative religious right dominates discussions of faith and morality in American politics. They complained that issues such as abortion and gay marriage seem to take priority over hunger, corporate crime and even the war in Iraq.

Some research has found that white Christians who attend worship services at least once a week are far more likely to vote Republican, while less frequent worshippers and those who are not religious tend to lean Democratic. Many analysts have criticized Democrats for failing to reach more effectively the country's religious voters.

"The sound bites and the headlines have co-opted people of faith," said the Rev. Tom Heger, pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church in Manchaca, south of Austin. "It would be a surprise to a lot of folks to discover that there are some very faithful, regular church attendees who aren't going to vote for Bush."

Conservative pastors such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson "would have us believe that morality is all about where you stand on abortion, how you treat homosexuals. I think that is simply wrong," said John D. Moyers, senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for American Progress.

The presidential race pits President Bush, a Republican who openly professes his evangelical Christian beliefs, against Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, a Roman Catholic who is more hesitant to discuss his faith publicly.

The Rev. Timothy Tutt, a pastor of United Christian Church in Austin, declined to say whom he would support in November, but balked at the perception that Bush was the only choice for people of faith. *AP*

Famed Life fotog dead at 97

NEW YORK—Carl Mydans, who photographed 20th-century events from the Great Depression to wars and politics and was a charter member of the Life magazine staff that pioneered magazine photojournalism, has died. He was 97.

Mydans died Monday night of heart failure at his home in Larchmont, according to his son, Seth.

Mydans traveled the world with his cameras, witnessing and recording landmarks of history—the gaunt faces of 1930s dust-bowl farmers, Gen. Douglas MacArthur wading ashore in the Philippines, Frenchwomen having their heads shaved as punishment for "collaboration" with the Nazis, and the Japanese surrender aboard the battleship USS Missouri in 1945.

Among his more memorable photos was one showing homebound rail commuters on Nov. 22, 1963, reading newspapers with the headline "President Shot Dead."

His wife, Shelley Smith Mydans, was also a journalist, and they often teamed up. During World War II, they were imprisoned by the Japa-nese for nearly two years. Shelley Mydans died two years ago.

Carl Mydans' habit of carrying a camera enabled him to combine words and pictures; in later years as a photographer he was known for keeping detailed diaries, and he had a parallel career as an author of books. *AP*

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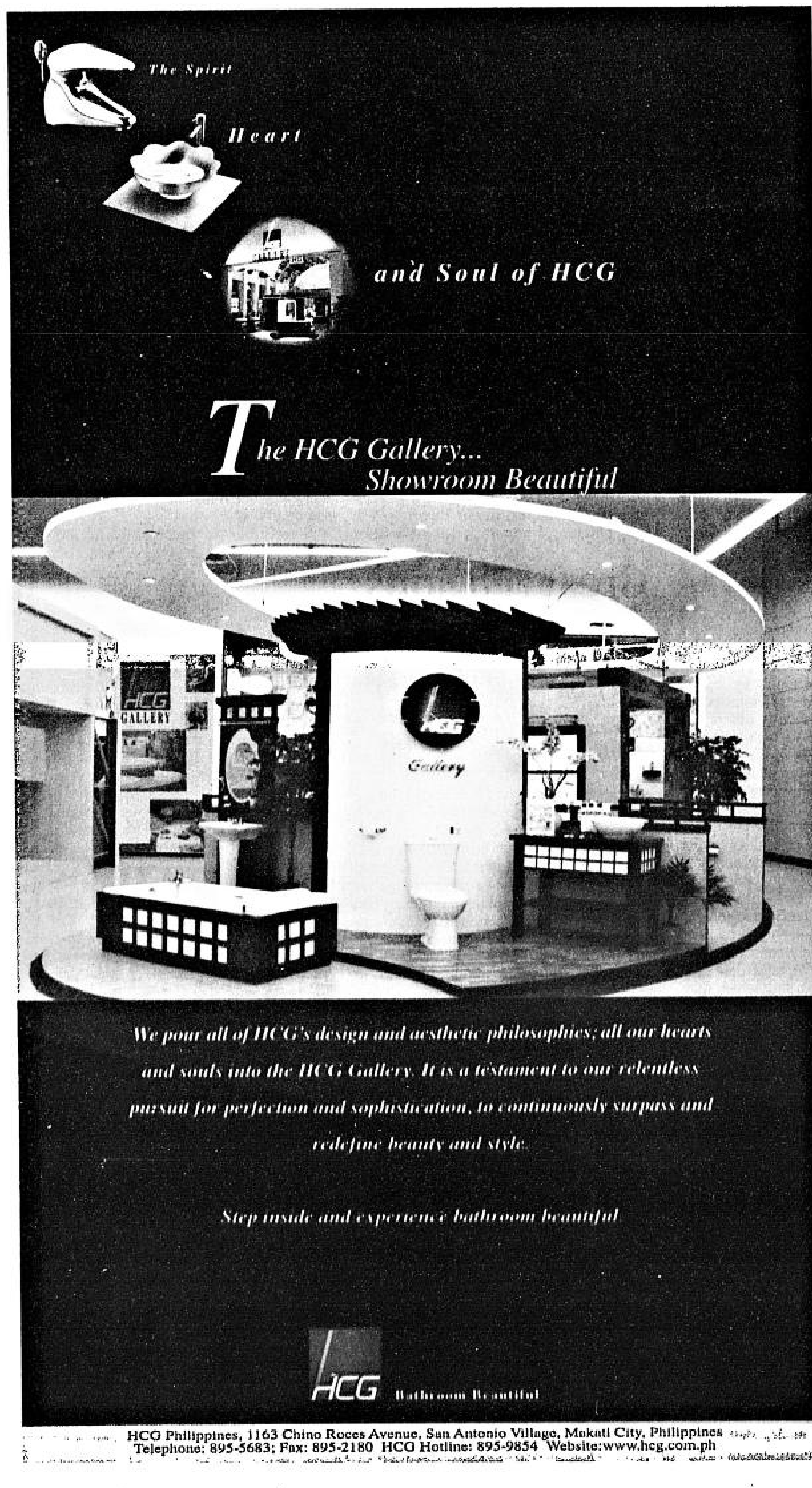

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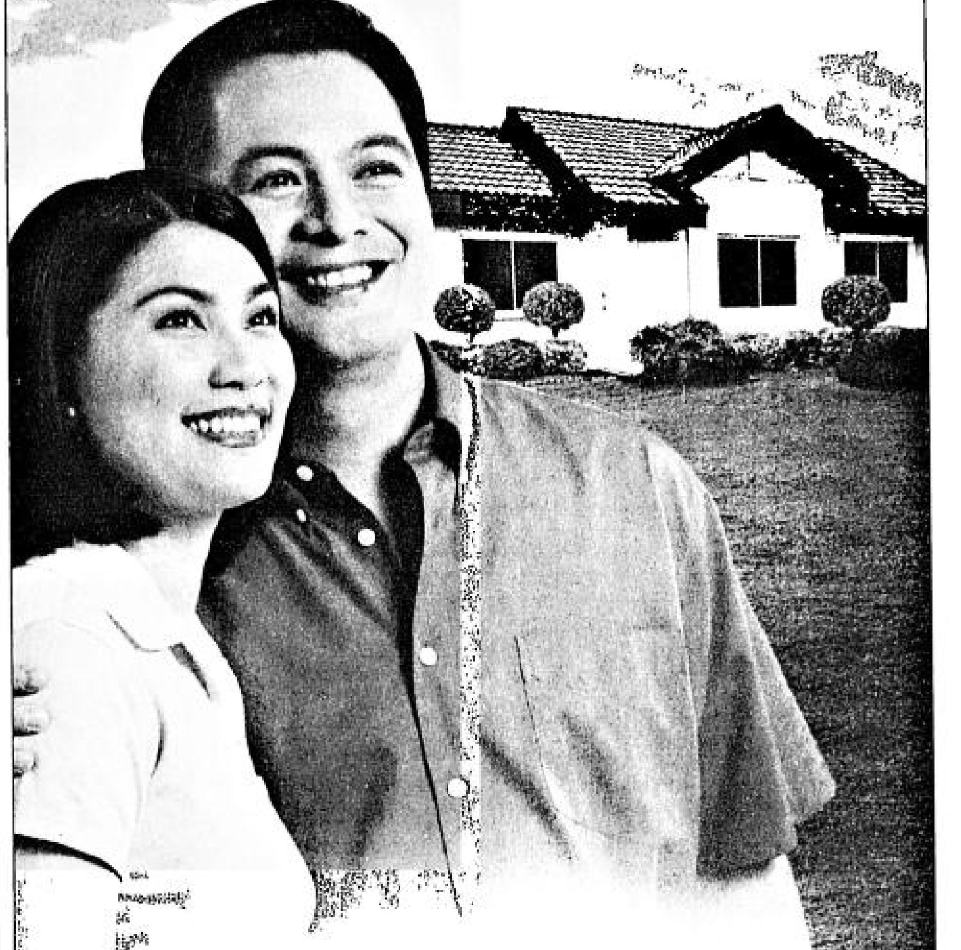

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ISSN 0116-2642
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 19 No. 253

OPINION

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

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Blood and rage

EDITORIAL

THE CRUCIAL thing for journalists to do vis à vis the wave of murders inundating their ranks is to keep the pressure on authorities to find and bring the killers to justice. The task involves continuing to train the spotlight on the issue, with the intent of wearing down the apparent indifference of not only the authorities but also the general public, and paving the way for the latter to apprehend the implications of the killings on this so-called democratic space. That the public has yet to feel the impact of 55 journalists murdered in 18 years is clear. (Otherwise, according to reasonable expectation, there would have been such a hue and cry as to not allow the Philippine National Police a moment's peace. And PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane would have been hounded out of office, and his proposal to arm journalists continually exposed as not only an appallingly primitive idea but also a patent abdication of the police force's responsibility to protect the citizenry and enforce the law.) It behooves journalists to take on the mission of making the impact felt.

But it's a mission easier said than done in this country where the powers that be, for whom the preservation of the status quo is paramount, are not exactly averse to keeping the public in abysmal ignorance, and where, as matter of consequence, infotainment now holds pride of place in the prevailing discourse. These days, partly because of the overarching reach of television, public attention is riveted by such spectacles as the Olympics, the improbably named Keanna Reeves and "escort services," Kris Aquino, or the TV network war. With this as backdrop, it is only through a determined effort to sound the alarm on the growing number of murdered journalists will the issue manage to gain a toehold in the public imagination.

That those killed were working in the provinces poses another difficulty for the mission to take the issue to the prominence that it deserves. No matter that they were said to have waged crusades against corruption and other criminal activities, their areas of operation were circumscribed by the distance from where it is said the action is: Metro Manila. The distance has resulted in indifference—a case of imposed isolation (and not only in terms of geography), if there ever was one; discrimination is what it actually is.

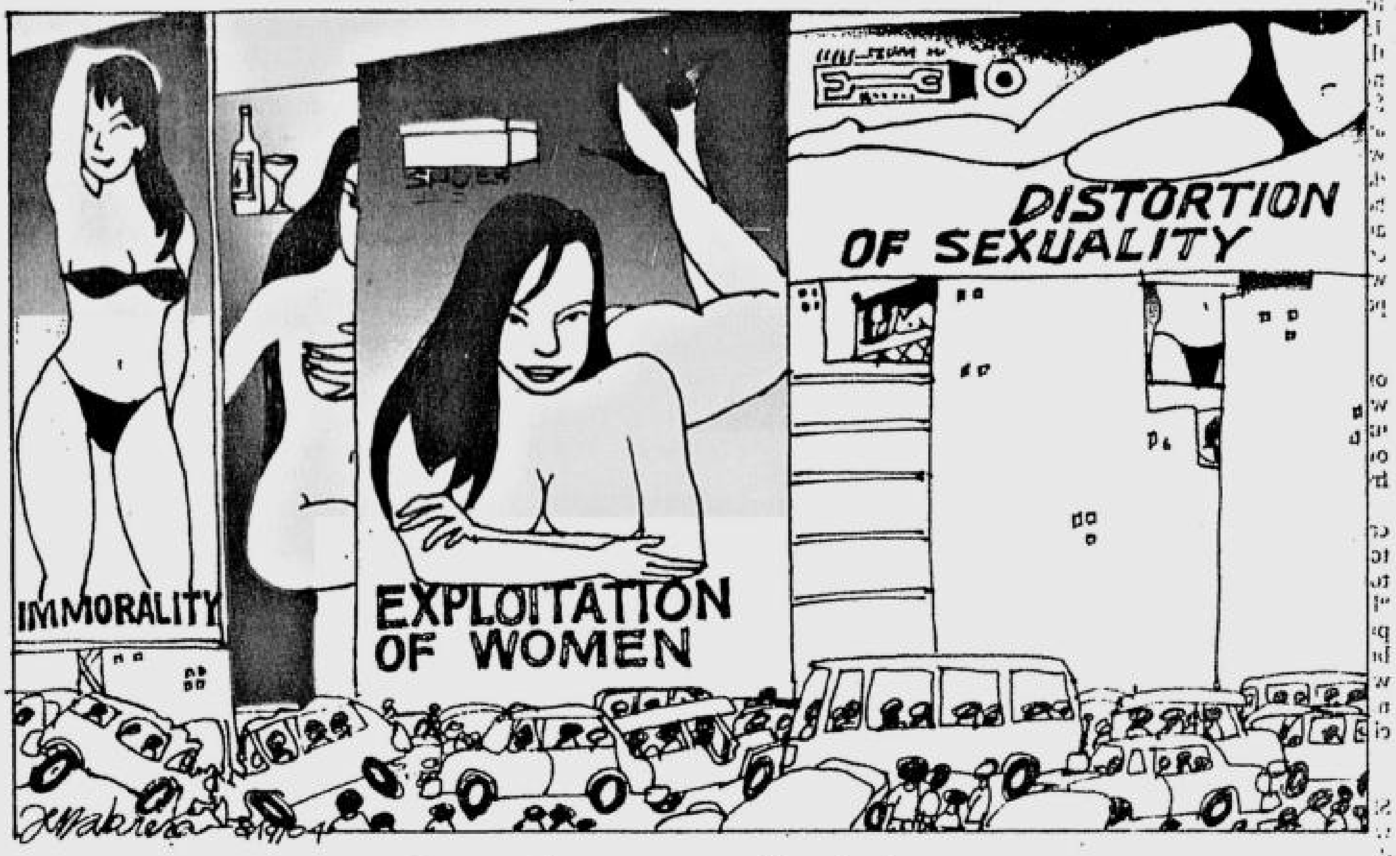
The task is to present the journalist as what he or she has become on top of serving as source of information: a spokesperson of the people in their (often adversarial) relationship with the state. But how to do this when the face of journalism that the public mainly sees on television is that of talent managers and entertainment personalities behaving as reporters, or of reporters comporting themselves like movie stars and presenting issues in bits and pieces that come across as gossip?

And yet this is the critical task for journalists to perform if they are to engage the public in the fight to stop the murders and protect their ranks, and to keep the pressure on authorities to find and bring the killers to justice. By virtue of their base of operation, journalists in Metro Manila have the additional responsibility of bestirring themselves, focusing attention on the unsolved killings and ensuring that the pressure on authorities is unrelenting.

It is, after all, a battle for survival in a fast contracting democratic space where not even the prospect of a financial reward has helped bring the murderers to light.

In the essay "Censored, Banned, Gagged" published in 1963, Nadine Gordimer wrote about censorship and repression in South Africa. It's something to ponder on in these days of blood and rage.

Gordimer wrote in part: "The attitude toward gagged writers and journalists is more complicated because organizations and individuals in general are inclined to be frightened off by the fact that these are leftist writers and journalists, some of them named communists. The sad old paradox arises of those who will fight for the freedom to write what they want to write, but are not sure it really ought to be extended to other people who may want to write something different. Perhaps, like the Afrikaans writers, who thought censorship wouldn't touch them, people who keep silent on the subject of gagged writers will wake up, too late, to find that freedom is indivisible and that when professional freedom was withheld from one or two little known leftist writers, it was lost to them, too."



Bamboo reed vision

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"DO not look at the heavens through a bamboo reed."

Japan's global reach today underscores how its people heeded this counsel from Meiji-era farmers.

What about Filipinos? Our geography is also insular. Do we look beyond our shores? Or do we subliminally assume, as critics snort, that the world pivots around the Philippines? Are we locked into tunnel vision by bamboo reeds?

Cyberage media and inter-country analysis, among others, can help strip away reed blinders. Scan Human Development Report 2004, just released by the United Nations Development Programme. The study's international and quality-of-life indicators offer a valuable tutorial.

Many Filipinos think their cell phone is worth dying for. So, how many are cell-phone subscribers? HDR's table on "Technology Diffusion and Creation" gives an insight on how this "text-messaging capital of the world" stacks up among other countries.

The last year for which cross-country comparisons were available was 2002. Out of every 1,000 Filipinos, 191 hefted a cell phone. That number has soared further.

Within Asean, the numbers vary: from 796 in Singapore and 377 in Malaysia to 10 in Laos. In a world context, Norway had 844 while Niger, in Africa, had one.

That disparity reflects the "digital divide" that fractures the 21st century's "information highway." Telephone mainlines feed into that highway, specially the Internet, with its massive data bases.

Out of every 1,000 Filipinos, 42 were linked to a phone mainline. Vietnam had 48, Indonesians 55, Koreans 489 and Japanese 558. On the flip side, we find the Burmese with only 14 and Zambians with eight.

Availability of these modern tools partly stem from cash. Thus, gaps in economic performance are illustrative. "If we're so smart, why aren't we rich?" Terrence Jones of UNDP Philippines once cracked.

Filipinos, per head, have $4,170, PHDR reports. For Singaporeans, per capita GDP had risen to $20,886. It was $7,010 for Thais. Norwegians earned $41,974 while an Ethiopian made do with only $780. Destinations of overseas foreign workers are selected in accord with that reality.

In its "Inequality Measures," PHDR 2004 says patterns of how wealth within a country are skewed. The poorest 10 percent of Filipinos huddle in city slums or depressed farms. They make do with a fraction below three centavos out of every peso. In "gated enclaves," the richest 10 percent consume 37 centavos.

When sluggish economic performance interlocks with continued population increases, the spinoffs slice through society's fabric.

Consider what were once dubbed as the "Southeast Asian twins": Thailand and the Philippines. In 1975, both had roughly the same number of people: about 42 million. Since then, the "twins" have gone their separate ways.

Manila faltered in its "demographic transition" from high-births-high-deaths to lower levels. Fertility today remains at 2.3 percent. That's an additional 4,000 babies every day to nourish, care for and educate, notes Dr. Aurora Perez of the University of the Philippines Office of Population Institute.

In contrast, Bangkok moderated population growth and moved into low-deaths-low births. Thai fertility is down to 1.2. Thus, Thailand's population is 64 million today while ours stands at 83 million.

Demographic changes, however, don't happen overnight. Sheer momentum of earlier add-ons guarantee that. Come 2015, we'll probably find the "twins" even farther apart: there could be 96.3 Filipinos and 69.9 million Thais then.

Chronic hunger, meanwhile, affects thousands. Out of every 100 Filipinos, 22 are undernourished. That's on par with Laotians. But it is only six for Indonesians and zero for Koreans, Malaysians and Finns.

But shriveling away from short rations is not the stuff of headlines. "These are people of the broken plough, who bear the face of hunger, for whom it is almost too late," Food and Agriculture Organization's Ubaidullah Khan wrote.

Tuberculosis, for instance, afflicts 734 out of every 100,000 Cambodians and 540 Filipinos. But TB incidence for Singaporeans is 39.

Education is an escape hatch from penury. Only 79 out of every 100 who enroll in elementary school here reach Grade 5—better than Laos' 62. But 94 Thais and 99 Chinese move on to Grade 6.

Time may be the scarcest of our resources today, former Health Undersecretary Mario Taguiwalo told a Philippine Press Institute seminar. "Congress debated for 32 days to canvass who won as president and vice president in the last elections," he noted. "In that time, P23.8 billion was tacked on as additional interest to the national government's debt."

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's term peters out in six years. Within that span of time, about 12.6 million more Filipinos will be born. That's roughly the equivalent of another National Capital Region or Ilocos.

Elbow room for democratic decisions to provide for growing numbers, with youthful rising expectations, narrows with delays. Leadership, therefore, not time, may be the scarcest resource after all.

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Great religions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE followed with much interest the debate between feminists and representatives of the Church, notably Bishop Oscar Cruz, following the Vatican's letter, written mainly by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, castigating feminists for their views. I found last Sunday's Talk of the Town riveting in that respect, though I felt a little frustrated from the brevity of the articles. I guess the subject is far too complex to be exhausted by, or merely done justice with, a few remarks.

I'll add my two cents' worth to the talk of the town. I take off from a passage in Amaryllis Torres' article ("The Church reinforces women's subordination"), which is a quote from a statement by a group of Asian religious women that met in Manila in 1985: "As Church people, we have come to realize that the highly patriarchal churches have definitely contributed to the subjugation of women. We unearthed theological premises, traditions and beliefs that have prevented us from becoming fully human and have blurred the image of God that we are."

There is easily a case to be made for the "highly patriarchal churches" quoting Scripture, as Shakespeare said, like the devil himself to suit their purposes. Those purposes being "to put women in their place," which is as inferior to men. But I don't know that the problem doesn't go deeper, as a hugely popular and controversial fiction writer, Dan Brown, recently suggested in "The Da Vinci Code." What if it's not just a matter of bad, or self-serving, or male-oriented, interpretations of the gospel? What if the Christian teachings themselves, however you slice them, truly attempt "to put women in their place"?

There is one thing the so-called "great religions" have in common: they all prescribe an inferior role for women. That is so notwithstanding the protestations of their followers about the Bible or the Koran or the Torah reckoning men and women to be equal in God's or Allah's eyes. The practice refutes the theory. Islam is the most relentless in its deprecation of women, taking extreme form in barbaric Taliban practices. I once saw a feature on National Geographic about a girl who had pretty much lost a great deal of her body and facial parts from being cut off by her husband for various offenses. She had lost an arm, a leg, her nose, and an eye, and would have lost her tongue as well presumably for speaking out of turn had she not been rescued by concerned neighbors.

For all Confucianism's reasonability, we remember the Chinese women whose feet were bound, a horrendously painful thing done to them while they were still children, maiming them for life, presumably because it improved aesthetics and the prospects of marriage. The torture was inflicted on them "for their own good."

And I don't know that Buddhism, for all its dazzling Zen koans, or riddles, and spirit of laughter, doesn't have its bad moments there. I remember a friend of mine telling me many years ago something that happened to her in Bangkok. She took the bus one fine day to get a feel of the local color, and that was exactly what she got. She managed to find a seat before the bus filled up. Among the passengers was a monk who stood beside her. After a while, all the passengers began to look at her with dagger eyes for reasons she could not fathom. A friend later told her aghast that she should have given up her seat to the monk.

Christianity itself, despite its two millennia of evolution, continues to have a strong anti-women streak. Which makes you wonder whether it is merely a matter of misinterpretation or the heart of the matter itself. Brown, of course, (as does Umberto Eco) echoes what many scholars have said, which is that Christianity, at least when Constantine turned it into a state religion, did not just extol its superiority but sought to obliterate all competition, chief of them the so-called "pagan religions," which hewed more closely to worship of Nature and the "sacred feminine."

But I don't know that you have to believe in that to lament the role women are consigned to in the Christian universe. The implications alone of a story of Creation where woman is fashioned from the ribs of man and man's downfall is caused by the devil using woman to corrupt him are staggering. Our puritanical attitudes toward sex (ironically, catholic means the opposite of parochial) retain a great deal of the essence of that story: Sex is dirty and debasing, women are instruments of the devil, bringing men down from their lofty heights. Married couples should endure sex with fortitude, mindful it is an instrument for carrying out God's plan. It's enough to make you say, "Jesus!"

The people, women and men, who say there is a need for women to reclaim their rightful place in the world, which is on equal footing with men, have a point. I myself don't much care whether they call themselves feminists or not. The extent to which women have been pinned by "the great religions" to the rack over the ages, which is not always metaphorical (the women who were burned at the stake for being witches, who were deemed so because they had the temerity to show intellectual gifts associated only with men, are estimated to run into the millions), makes it particularly imperative they do. To this very day, they continue to suffer from that lot, if in increasingly more metaphorical terms. At the very least, they are deemed passive breeders of children; at the very most, they are deemed the devil's first column, the temptresses that bring otherwise upright (unfortunately in the non-sexual sense) God-fearing men to their doom. Filipino pop songs are full of the latter sentiment.

You wonder where Ratzinger spent most of his life. Never has "in the convent" seemed more apt.

Win some, lose some

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS far as honesty goes, the country has won some and lost some recently. Nestor Ortiz Sulpico, a Filipino cab driver in New York City, got a lot of publicity for returning a bag full of pearls worth $70,000 to its owner. There's also honest ship captain Joseph Tobias who alerted immigration authorities about the suspicious behavior of police Supt. Antonio Gumiran, who was allegedly shielding and interceding for Jason Ivler. The latter, who was being sought by authorities for the death of a government official with the rank of undersecretary in a vehicular accident, was trying to escape to Malaysia. There's also honest immigration officer Jakaria Madlahuddin and the two Marines in Zamboanga City who rejected a $5,000 bribe to let Ivler go free. In a culture where bribery is common, such an act is heroic, especially among low-salaried officials.

* * *

The country lost honesty points in the case of Gumiran and two other police officers who were helping Ivler escape. They and their unidentified superior who gave the order ought to be prosecuted, if only to stop lawmen from providing such "escort" services.

The country lost some, too, in the appalling cases of fraudulent tax credit certificates (TCC) totaling P1 billion, filed by the Bureau of Customs that were dismissed by the courts due to "lack of evidence" or "lack of interest" on the part of prosecuting officials. There must have been collusion between BOC and court officials with the companies whose cases were dismissed. Congress and our investigating agencies should get to the bottom of this scam.

* * *

A few weeks back, Indian Ambassador Navrekha Sharma invited me to the premiere her embassy was cosponsoring with Makati Cinemanila festival director Amable Aguiluz of the beautiful award-winning Hindi epic movie on tragic love, "Devdas." The film about a London-educated young lawyer who let his childhood love slip through his fingers because of the pressure of social class won the Golden Lotus Award for "best popular film" at the National Film Award in India last year. The ambassador earlier said the film, which was based on one of the most widely read novels in India, written in 1917 by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, and directed by well-known Indian director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, features very beautiful women and handsome men and a gargantuan production. She wasn't exaggerating. The beauty of film star Aishwarya Rai, who plays Devdas' immortal love, is haunting, while the production, set against the backdrop of early 20th century India, was the most expensive ever undertaken there, (equivalent to P603 million). Worthy of Cecile B. De Mille. But aside from being a marvelous visual treat, what makes "Devdas" heart-wrenching is that, as an Indian critic put it, "(it) is in the mould of classical tragedy where a small blemish in character is visited upon by disproportionately severe retribution." Interestingly, the "Devdas" shown in Makati was the ninth remake since 1929! That sure beats the record of any classic Hollywood film. If it will ever be re-shown here, I suggest that you catch it.

* * *

The Indian ambassador also told me that she was in Mindanao recently with a few other envoys to observe a peace conference in Marawi City. While there, she visited the National Steel Corp. in Iligan City, which a London-based Indian firm, Global Steel Works, had acquired from the Philippine government recently. She was pleased to note that the newly reopened NSC now employs over 1,000 Filipino workers under the supervision of about 30 Indian executives, who brought their families with them to Mindanao. A few problems still need to be ironed out between the Philippine government and the Indian company, but by and large, says Sharma, the partnership is there, contributing to the big island's development. That's welcome news.

* * *

Still on the diplomatic front, Japanese Ambassador Kojiro Takano sent me recently a copy of the special bulletin on Japan's Official Development Assistance for 2004, which he hoped would bring about greater understanding and appreciation of what his government is doing to help the RP government in its "development goals." I learned a few interesting things about Japan's ODA, which consists of grants, aid and technical assistance, funneled through multilateral agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations and the World Bank, as well as through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), "which carry no obligation for repayment by the recipient country." Then there are the government loans that are "extremely concessional" (a low average interest rate of 1.34 percent payable in 33 years, plus a 10-year grace period), extended through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). Japan's ODA, which goes back to the mid-1960s, has accounted for 51 percent of all ODAs for the past 10 years. Compare this to the United States' 14 percent, Australia's 6 percent, the Netherlands' 4 percent and Germany's 3 percent. The Philippines is the third largest recipient of Japan's ODA in Asia, with 7 percent, next to Indonesia, 13.7 percent, and China, 12.2 percent. But on a per capita basis, RP is the top aid recipient.

Japanese ODA have gone into a wide range of development projects all over the country, such as school buildings, airports, power and energy projects, and some of major ports, such as those in Subic, Cagayan de Oro and Batangas. On a recent trip to Cebu, I learned that the new 4.48 km south coastal road connecting Cebu and Talisay cities was funded with a JBIC loan, which is also funding the 30.8 km Cebu South Road from Talisay to Carcar. On the other hand, 13 percent of all national highways, including the 2,100 km Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway from Aparri to Davao, have been constructed and rehabilitated through the Yen Loan.

Woman, religion and spirituality

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

EVERY woman who cares about the future of the women of this world and other planets should read this book. So should every caring man. And the befuddled, benighted ones—may they stumble upon this book in the most unlikely climes, at the most unlikely times; may someone care enough to shove it into their path or gift them with it, beautifully wrapped and scented, so that they may look upon it with curiosity and awe, and having read it, be filled with enormous regret that could turn into tremendous resolve to change things for the better.

The good news is that "Woman, Religion and Spirituality in Asia" (Anvil) by Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB was launched last Sunday at the National Book Fair. Mananzan, president of St. Scholastica's College for six years, was recently elected prioress of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in the Philippines.

The better news is that there is no better time than now for this book to come out. It comes in the aftermath of the tempest caused by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's letter on women, which caused women (hmmm, like me) to answer back.

And the best news? The book is easy to read. Surprisingly simple but engrossing, I would say, coming as it does from a scholar and activist nun whose doctoral dissertation at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (where almost all the popes studied) was pompously titled "The Language Game of Confessing One's Belief: A Wittgensteinian-Austinian Approach to the Linguistic Analysis of Creedal Statements." A journalist would write, tongue in cheek, "Ways of Saying 'I Believe.'" But I digress.

As her latest opus shows, Mananzan has come a long way from there to here. No heavy exegetical discussions here. She also gives us a peek into her own evolution.

The role of religion in the socialization of women has fascinated Mananzan for a long time. What was the impact of institutional religions in Asia on women? And so she embarked on a research that led her to various places in Asia.

Mananzan delves into the world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, and the non-world religions (indigenous, folk and new religions, Confucianism) as well. How have the scriptures and written works in these religions portrayed women?

But first, the author makes sure the reader understands the difference between religion/religiosity and spirituality. She also gives a historical perspective of the Asian feminist theology of liberation whose task is twofold: to deconstruct whatever is oppressive and to reconstruct whatever is liberating.

Having said that, she then walks the reader through the ancient and the contemporary. She gives the short history and basic teachings of each religion and offers concrete examples of how women have been regarded and treated/mistreated owing in part to scriptures and religious traditions. Which elements in these religions can be oppressive, which ones can be liberating?

Quite effective is Mananzan's use of vignettes and portraits of goddesses and historical women of yore who are considered icons. So are her one-on-one interviews with contemporary women who are making breakthroughs in their respective religions now.

Women in Christianity taking bold steps have their counterparts in other faiths. Mananzan has herself made ground-breaking moves in the women's front—the Institute for Women's Studies, Women Ecology and Wholeness Farm, the Women Crisis Center, to name a few.

The chapter on Christianity is the shortest. Maybe because a lot has been written on this. The chapters on Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are fuller. For nervous Christians, here are some reassuring lines, if you don't know this already: "Amid the appalling oppressive elements in Christianity, there are liberating factors. The most liberating aspect of Christianity is Christ himself who went against the traditions and customs of his time to single out women in the fulfillment of his mission… In spite of the repressive elements in church history, some women rose to great heights…" Sadly, many church fathers forget.

The book presents excerpts from Hindu scriptures that are positive/ambivalent and blatantly misogynist (anti-woman). These must have contributed to Hindu society's toleration of gruesome crimes (bride burning, dowry deaths) against women. The brief portrait of the Hindu goddess (Kali-Durga), an account on the life of a poet-mystic (Mirabai), as well as the experiences of a victim and a Hindu feminist provide the reader varied woman images from this mystifying and most ancient religion.

Developments in Buddhism are, surprisingly, quite intriguing. The growing movement pushing for bikkhunis (ordained female monks, not nuns) is worth watching. There is, in Sri Lanka, a move to restore this. In Thailand, where it was never a practice, a couple of women got themselves ordained and caused a stir. To think that we associate Buddhism with serenity and pacifism.

"Any discussion of the status of women in Islam," Mananzan warns, "is fraught with the dangers of overgeneralization and oversimplification." Do you know that pre-Islamic women had no rights? Islam raised the status of women. Noted Muslim women scholars are now reinterpreting the Qur'an, the Hadith and other Muslim writings from the perspective of women.

Read about the cruel practice of female circumcision, "honor deaths" (e.g., execution of a rape victim), injustice in unproven rape, to name a few. Celebrate the life of Aisha, Mohammed's child-bride and favorite wife who later became one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history.

I have run out of space. I hope you get that book and read it.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Nationalism

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

AFTER THE MASSACRE at Amritsar, Mahatma Gandhi said to British officials led by the viceroy of India: "I beg you to accept that there is no people on earth who wouldn't prefer their own bad government to the good government of an alien power."

About 10 years earlier, a Filipino said basically the same thing: "I prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans." It was a sound bite heard around the world. But what all too few recalled was the essential sentence that came next: "Because, however bad a Filipino government might be, we can always change it."

To this day, there are Filipinos who, whenever something goes wrong, cackle and say, "Look, Quezon got his wish. We have a government run like hell!" As if it is something uniquely Quezonian—and Filipino—to want to run our own lives, badly as the case may be, rather than entrust it to the guidance of foreigners.

What Quezon and Gandhi said roughly a decade apart is the essence of nationalism: a people, a nation, must have the chance to make good and bad decisions, because there is simply no substitute for decisions made for one's self, by one's self. Government will not always be good, leaders will not always be the best, but in the end, a government and its leaders must be selected by the people and no one else. Love of country, nationalism, requires that a people have the freedom both to make mistakes and achieve great things. After all, the lives of individuals as well as nations require learning, and one cannot learn without, at times, doing wrong or making mistakes. Surely it is better to make one's own mistakes, to collectively endure errors of one's choosing, rather than undertake the same risks at the direction of a colonial power.

Nationalism is not my country, right or wrong, or everything for my countrymen at the expense of all aliens, but rather a more fundamental appreciation that one belongs to a people who have a country, and that the destiny of that country is in the hands of a people free to make errors but at the same time rectify their mistakes. It involves a sense of stewardship over a particular territory that geography and history have made the primary responsibility of no one else on earth but those who inhabit that territory.

When, as a child, I first asked what nationalism meant, I was simply told, "It means love of country." There are many kinds of love, as we all discover as we grow up, but fundamental to understanding love is that it requires a sense of self-worth and dignity. You cannot love and be loved, first of all, if you do not love yourself. And you cannot love properly if your love is the kind that is dependent merely on the approval of others, or measured by what you might believe to be the superior love of others. To love one's country is to love one's land and people with all their flaws, despite all their wrongs; and to maintain, at the same time, a conviction that one's love for nation and nationhood will result in a better, stronger country.

As a child, every Aug. 19, I would look at the statue of Quezon in Letran and wonder what it was he was portrayed as being in the act of saying. Eventually I asked one Dominican, who looked at me sternly and thundered, "He is saying, 'I love the Philippines!'" And the answer satisfied me.

Many years later, I came across a recording of one of Quezon's speeches, and it is the only one I have committed to memory both due to its brevity and its being to the point. The speech was recorded in the 1920s, when he was first diagnosed with tuberculosis and assumed he didn't have much longer to live. It goes like this:

"My fellow citizens: there is one thought I want you always to bear in mind. And that is: that you are Filipinos. That the Philippines are your country, and the only country God has given you. That you must keep it for yourselves, for your children, and for your children's children, until the world is no more. You must live for it, and die for it, if necessary.

"Your country is a great country. It has a great past, and a great future. The Philippines of yesterday are consecrated by the sacrifices of lives and treasure of your patriots, martyrs, and soldiers. The Philippines of today are honored by the wholehearted devotion to its cause of unselfish and courageous statesmen. The Philippines of tomorrow will be the country of plenty, of happiness, and of freedom. A Philippines with her raised in the midst of the West Pacific, mistress of her own destiny, holding in her hand the torch of freedom and democracy. A republic of virtuous and righteous men and women all working together for a better world than the one we have at present."

These are the basics we often overlook, but which are the requirements for true love of country: A sense of identity. A sense of belonging. A sense of responsibility and accountability to the past, to the present, and to the future. Most of all, a dream of a country that is no one's but our own, and for which we must always retain the fondest dreams to inspire us as we go about our daily lives.

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

A Spanish summer

YOUNG BLOOD

Niña Marie Hernandez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

ASIDE FROM THE SERIOUS business of making *lakwatsa*, the other purpose of my trip to Spain was to attend a field course that would produce a geological map of a place measuring nine square kilometers in area. The town under study was called Molinos (pop. 300-500) in the province of Teruel, in the region of Aragon, about 300 kilometers from Barcelona.

I had flown two-and-a-half hours from Copenhagen to Barcelona, and from there it was a five-hour drive to Molinos. We arrived in Molinos shortly after midnight on June 10.

The first thing you notice there is the smell of goats, which immediately tells you that this is a remote town indeed. Then you wake up in the morning, and go to the town square which actually forms a circle with all the buildings around it. You stand in the middle of the circle, take 10 steps, and you are inside the church built sometime in the 13th century. You go out and take another 10 steps, and reach the *farmacia* (drugstore). You go 10 steps further and you find yourself inside the town library. Another 10 steps more and you reach the town shop. And so on.

Every day we had breakfast at eight in the morning, during which we discussed our plans for the day with the professor. By nine, we were off to the mountains, lugging our geological tools consisting of a hammer, a compass, a bottle of hydrochloric acid and magnifying glass, plus a big bottle of water, one long baguette, some cheese and a can of tuna, which were all we had for lunch every single day for 10 days.

We would spend the whole day smashing rocks, measuring strikes and dips (a strike is the general direction of the rock layers, and dip is its inclination to the horizontal), classifying them as wackestone, packestone, mudstone and so on, looking for oyster layers that lived like a million years ago (seriously), or for ammonites that lived when dinosaurs roamed the earth.

You would think it is fun—but only if you were just thinking about it. Do it with the sun beating down on you and some prickly plants clinging on your legs as you climb up a 45-degree incline, and then it is not much fun at all.

Still the hardest part was locating myself in a map. If you have read "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and if you remember the drawing of the place where the little prince landed (two curved lines with no landmark at all), that was exactly where it felt like, except that I wasn't in the Sahara Desert but in Molinos.

And so, after five days of being fried under the Spanish sun, I found myself praying for something I never thought I would want: for somebody to please, please, bring me back to Denmark.

There were fun days, too, like the time when a flock of sheep just materialized behind us. (We had not seen them coming because we were working along a curved road.) One of our colleagues started shouting, telling us to get their bags off the road because the sheep were going to run over them. I was too stunned to react, although my mind was screaming, "Kodak! Kodak!" Meanwhile, the young shepherd was grinning from ear to ear, and to me, he looked like the shepherd Santiago in "The Alchemist," going to Egypt in search of his destiny.

A few days after that, I saw another shepherd—not a Santiago look-alike this time, but a shepherd with a dog, a broken tooth and a *baston*.

A common sight, too, in Molinos are old men walking with their donkeys, who walk even more slowly than they.

In our short stay, I saw a sight one never sees in Denmark but one sees quite often in the Philippines: the local drunkard engaged in a fist fight, complete with shouts and curses. It reminded me so much of my hometown in Bicol. As the Spanish like to say, *"Pueblo pequeño, grande infierno."* Small town, big hell. Which sounds familiar, right?

The night sky in Molinos can be magnificent. On our first night in town, we climbed up the church tower, and the light of the stars was so bright, so pure and unspoiled by non-existent city lights.

I have to say that going to Spain was a totally different experience for me. Unlike Denmark, or Norway or Sweden, where I feel very much like a foreigner, Spain seems much closer to home. One sees old people being helped by youngsters as they walk around. You can go to the shop and buy 100 grams of *jamon*, which is not unlike buying three Chocnuts back home. You can get milk that tastes like Nido, and eat *paella*, and buy *magdalena* (a kind of *mamon* that my mother used to buy in Daraga Bakery). You can ask the shop owner for advice on almost anything, including how to do your hair.

Of course, everyone looks like a foreigner (or rather, I look like a foreigner to them), but we share a culture that somehow makes the place feel like home.

Niña Marie Hernandez, 23, is taking her master's in petroleum engineering at Danmarks Tekniske Universitet in Denmark.

THEY SAID

Manila's downside

"In Manila, the standard of living is higher. The pressure and temptation for the policemen to make more money is also bigger."

—Central Luzon Chief Supt. Vidal Querol on why 90-percent of "kotong" cases are recorded in Metro Manila

Babies

"Those who want to deny life to others are already counted among the living. Those who do not want babies were once babies themselves."

—Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz on the population control issue

Exclusive journalists

"What ABS-CBN is saying is that if we won't be journalists for ABS-CBN, we have no right to be journalists at all."

—Eduardo Lingao on the lawsuit filed against him by his former employer after he and two others joined ABCS

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English in the pursuit of national progress

LAST Aug. 11, 2004, Ambeth Ocampo's column reminded us of Manuel Luis Quezon's preference for English as the official language of the Philippines. And Quezon was, indeed, considered *"Ama ng Wikang Pambansa"*; so why follow suit?

English preference is no longer a question of nationalism; it is a question of whether or not the Philippines can cope with the demands of this era of globalization and global competitiveness. English is the language of progress. It is the language of technology, education, government, trade and commerce, diplomacy, appreciation and understanding. It is not a slight on Filipino nationalism if a Filipino learns English and uses it to further enhance and enrich his culture and national identity. For in itself, learning how to speak the English language makes international sense.

I love the Philippines; but, I will love my country more if we, Filipinos, come close to the native speakers of the English in their proficiency in using that language in a natural way. If we must keep up with other nations in the global march to progress, we must learn to speak English as a second language.

—MARK ANTHONY B. AUSTRIA,
0865 Magtaquing West,
Bugallon, Pangasinan

No Angara-Lacson shouting match

THIS is in reaction to Mr. Ramon Tulfo's column titled "Angara and Lacson degrade Senate" (PDI, 8/7/04).

Please allow us to clarify some things. First of all, no shouting match ever took place between Senators Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson. It is not true that they raised their voices and had to be restrained by their colleagues during the regular caucus of the Senate minority. Senator Angara, as a ranking and responsible leader of the opposition, simply wanted to clarify some matters regarding Senator Lacson, which hopefully will be resolved at the earliest possible time. Senator Angara thought that this issue did not have to be discussed out in the open because this happened during a private and privileged meeting of opposition senators.

Secondly, Senator Angara spoke about this to the media only upon learning that Senator Lacson had earlier talked to the Senate reporters and had given them details of what transpired during the discussion.

—DON JUAN "DJ" BAGATSING,
executive assistant,
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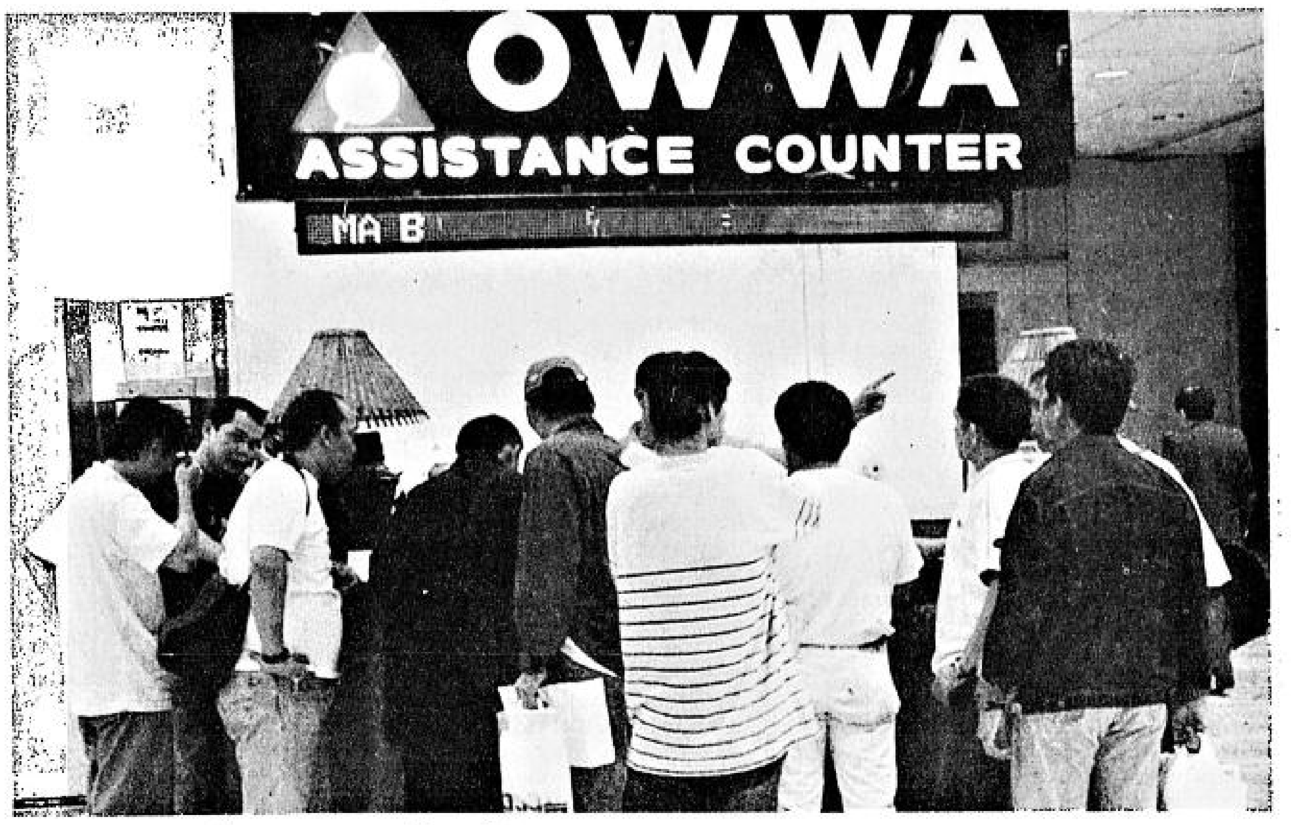

Let's treat our OFWs like kings

OUR overseas Filipino workers are called "heroes" because their dollar remittances (said to be at least $8 billion) keep our country from going bankrupt. Besides, they religiously pay whatever the government requires them to.

It is just right that they expect to be given full and swift compensation the moment they die, suffer injuries, or are unjustifiably terminated from their jobs. There is no justifiable reason for the Philippine Overseas and Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration not to immediately give the benefits due them or come to their rescue if a situation warrants.

Where have the billions of pesos that the OFWs paid to the POEA and Owwa gone? It is sad that these agencies are very fast and strict in demanding payments from our OFWs but very slow in extending to them their benefits, such that, as a rule, most of them or their beneficiaries practically have to go through a lot of trouble following up their compensations for death, injuries and the like.

The Owwa should be audited by a reliable private auditing firm, like SGV or Joaquin Cunanan, to make sure that its funds are not being squandered and used for some purpose other than intended. We believe, therefore, that privatization is the key to making POEA and Owwa responsive to the needs of our modern-day heroes.

Aside from delivering and acting immediately on the claims of our OFWs, the POEA and Owwa should also do the following :

1. Set up facilities in the Middle East, Hong Kong, Singapore, Europe and other heavily OFW-populated countries to assist OFWs and attend to their problems and complaints.

2. Put up centers where they can meet in order to ease the loneliness they experience in strange and distant lands.

3. Give higher benefits and compensation in cases of death, injuries, etc.

Our country owes these services and benefits to the OFWs whom we call our nation's heroes. They are the bravest people on earth who are willing to risk life and limb to provide their families with the means to live a decent life and to secure a bright future. With the billions of dollars that our OFWs are remitting to our country, they should be given the best service. We should roll out for them the red carpet, and we should honor and treat them like kings to show our everlasting gratitude.

—OSCAR I. VIOLAGO,
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San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders
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Church alienating feminists?

THE VATICAN'S "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World" fails in its attempt to serve as an "impetus for dialogue with all men and women of good will." A dialogue cannot be started in good faith when our positions and intentions as feminists are completely misrepresented.

In the letter, the Vatican has created a monster it calls "new approaches to women's issues." It is a monster many feminists do not recognize. The Vatican does not recognize that there are many approaches. It seeks to emphasize certain "tendencies," thus simplifying feminist theory and practice. What is more, it misrepresents the two tendencies it has chosen to emphasize. In so doing, it has rendered itself blind to the feminists among its own faithful.

Many feminists do not consider men as the enemy, contrary to what the Vatican implies. Many of us have male lovers, raise sons, work with men in our offices and homes, treasure our male friends, teach male students, etc. Many of us receive support from the men in our lives who are proud of our feminism. We understand the anguish and anger of women who are victims of a system that has made men insensitive to women. Unlike the Vatican, we understand and respect this anger and refuse to make it a point of contention.

In demonizing certain feminists, the Vatican recreates its dichotomy of "good" and "bad" women. The Church has been doing this for centuries and has brought many women harm. It also refuses to reach out to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender peoples. It refuses to see the love and morality in families that exist outside the "man, woman and child" model.

Lastly, the Vatican interprets feminists' efforts to end injustice and oppression as antagonistic. In so doing, it denies the extent of women's suffering. Women are the majority of the world's poor and dispossessed. Women suffer most the ravages of war, rape, sexual assault and discrimination. Those who seek to end this must attempt to change the order of our lives, families and societies. But this cannot be seen as wrong merely because it upsets what many, including some sectors of the Church, accept as customary.

—SYLVIA ESTRADA-CLAUDIO, MD, Ph.D.,
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JUNICE DEMETERIO-MELGAR, MD,
executive director, Linangan ng Kababaihan
Inc. (Likhaan), 92 Times St.,
West Triangle Homes, Quezon City

Cost of North Rail Project reasonable

REGRARDING the articles on the North Rail Project (PDI, 8/14/04 8/16/04), we would like to clarify the following:

1. The "nearly P1-billion cost per kilometer" of the project's Phase 1 appears to have been arrived at by dividing the $503-million total project cost by the project length of 32.14 km. This calculation is misleading since the project has several components: a 32.14-km, double rail track system between Caloocan to Malolos, consisting of: (a) civil and track works (which includes rail tracks, stations, depot, etc., worth $281 million); (b) 21 four-car train (84 car trains) rolling stock worth $88 million; (c) additional right of way for narrow sections and relocation of utilities which would cost $18 million; (d) signaling and communications estimated at $30 million; and (e) other costs amounting to $87 million.

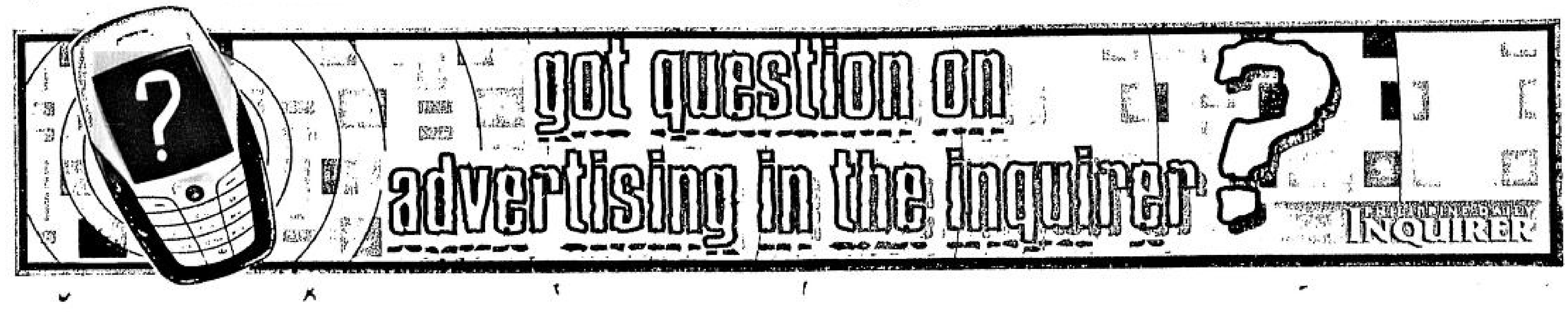
Based on the breakdown, the cost per kilometer of the civil and track works for 32.14-km double track system is only $4.3 million or P240 million and the cost per rail kilometer is $4.2 million or P234 million. As for the $87 million (other costs), $75 million of this would go to pay for taxes and $19 million, for project management, among others, while the rolling stock is estimated at $1 million per car train. Thus, we believe that the cost of the North Rail Project-Phase 1 is reasonable and comparable to industry standards.

2. On the need for the government to "undertake a very thorough feasibility study on this project," we assure the public that the project underwent the normal government approval process, including a feasibility study, submitted as a requirement to the Investment Coordination Committee, which reviewed and validated it. The ICC based its decision on the economic viability of rail transport to impart social benefits by providing reliable, efficient, environment-friendly, convenient and time-saving mode of public transportation. As for the North Rail, it will decongest Metro Manila—one of the President's eight-point agenda for a Strong Republic—and encourage dispersal of Metro Manila's population toward Central and Northern Luzon, thus spurring growth in the north.

The ICC also deemed the project financially feasible based on revenue forecasts that used projections on traffic volumes.

The bulk of the project will be financed through a highly concessional loan from the Chinese government with a 20-year repayment period, inclusive of a 5-year grace period at 3 percent interest. This is the first time that the Chinese government is giving us a highly concessional loan for rail projects.

—ROMULO L. NERI,
secretary of socioeconomic planning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Police told to stop road users' tax

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Malacañang and the provincial government of Laguna came closer to a collision course over road users' taxes as police started to enforce President Macapagal-Arroyo's order to put a stop to the taxes' collection in the province.

The Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) police office yesterday directed all provincial police units to arrest anyone who collects the tax from delivery vehicles in the region.

The order came a few days after Laguna Gov. Teresita Lazaro defended the taxes and said the provincial government would continue to collect them.

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, Calabarzon police director, instructed the police chiefs of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon provinces to apprehend checkpoint personnel "who illegally levy taxes or fees along the national road within your respective areas."

He said the order was in response to complaints raised by members of the business sector during the third "Pulong Bayan" (town meeting) of Ms Arroyo inside the Ford Compound in Sta. Rosa town two weeks ago.

Senior Supt. Ernesto Cuizon, Calabarzon police public information officer, said they would inspect all checkpoints in the region that were set up to collect fees from delivery vans.

"We are just being consistent with the policy of the government and the call of the President to protect the interests of the business sector by ensuring that no unlawful charges will be collected from them," Cuizon told the INQUIRER.

During the meeting, businessmen protested the P500 being levied against them by Laguna officials for using national roads.

This irked President Arroyo who immediately ordered a stop to the tax collection.

The President even challenged Lazaro to sue her in court over the road users' tax issue.

Lazaro said Laguna would continue collecting the tax which, she said, was very minimal "since it had been pegged at P500 since 1994."

In a letter to Varilla, Director Avelino Razon, Philippine National Police operations head, said taxes collected from motorists using the main highways of Southern Luzon and some parts of Mindanao obstruct the free flow of goods in those regions.

Razon said the fees also contribute to the rising costs of merchandise being sold in the provinces.

He said while the Local Government Code allows local governments to impose taxes, such fees should not exceed P500 annually.

"There have been complaints and reports on some illegal collections at checkpoints amounting to P50," Razon said in the letter.

He instructed Varilla to submit a report on their operations not later than Aug. 22. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Aurora fishermen barely survive despite rising RP fisheries production

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

BALER, Aurora—The most that fisherman Dominador Valle earns in a day is P50 to P100.

Using only hook and line (*panti*) in his trade, the 55-year-old Valle, like everyone else in Barangay Sabang here, is called a *mananakay*.

More than 65 percent of fishermen in Baler (pop: 30,000) are *mananakay*, according to Councilor Rey Mapindan, chair of the municipal council's agriculture committee.

They hitch in other fishermen's boats and share their catch with the boat owners.

On lean days, the 5-percent share of the catch means 5 kg. The catch is considered good enough if most of the yield were *galunggong* and *hasa-hasa* that sell P70 and P78 per kg on a Tuesday.

Valle said most of the time, staying at sea for three hours gives him only *sapsap*. The fish sells for P40 a kg.

"The income has really not been enough. Four of my sons are helping out," he told the INQUIRER on Tuesday as he waited for Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) officials to turn over a patrol boat and a sample of a *lantay* (bamboo crib) for seaweed farming.

"I wish I could afford to buy a boat. (But) it's impossible to buy one with what I manage to earn as a *mananakay*."

Mapindan said Valle's woe is not simply about having no boat.

"Out there (at Baler Bay), all sorts of destruction are being done on marine resources," he said.

The continued use of fishing gear like baby trawls that damage corals, the use of dynamite sticks to draw large catch, and cyanide to yield tropical fishes for export have damaged the bay, he said.

These things happen despite the existence of the Philippine Fisheries Code or Republic Act 8550, which bans harmful fishing methods, he said.

"It's so difficult to implement the law," he said.

He hoped the patrol boat, worth more than P1 million, and active bay watching by Bantay Dagat teams could help.

An inventory of holders of permits to fish in the municipal waters of Baler is being done to weed out violators, Mapindan said.

While Valle's experience tells of low catch and nil income, fisheries production in the Philippines has grown at an average of 5 percent since 2001, BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento Jr. said.

Last year, Sarmiento said production reached 3.6 million metric tons.

"There's an ever increasing trend since 2001 when the Philippines for the first time breached the 3-million (metric tons) mark," he told the INQUIRER, quoting a report from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics.

But he said municipal fisheries production still lags behind, with a contribution of 32 percent to the overall production.

The government, he said, has been promoting aquaculture (breeding and growing fish in ponds).

"Fishermen are not supposed to go hungry because the sea offers bountiful resources. We need to have the means to fish as well as support from government," Valle said.

HANDICAPPED
SENIOR CITIZENS
CROSSING
ONLY

EXCLUSIVE LANE

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A woman vendor crosses a street in downtown Baguio City apparently heeding a sign that sets that portion of the road as a crossing lane for the elderly and handicapped.

Suspect in Olongapo student's slaying yields

OLONGAPO CITY—The suspect in the slaying of a 19-year-old student in Barangay West Tapinac here surrendered to the police on Tuesday.

Police said Alfredo Castillo, 23, went into hiding in Kawit, Cavite, after he allegedly stabbed and killed Mary Ann Briones on Saturday.

Castillo, a native of Dinalupihan, Bataan, was accompanied by his relatives when he surrendered to the Olongapo City police and the regional police's intelligence and investigation unit on Tuesday morning.

Mayor James Gordon Jr. said this city remained peaceful despite Briones' killing.

Gordon said the crime shocked residents because the city has been a peaceful community with a low crime index, mostly petty and "rarely this dramatic."

Senior Supt. Orlando Maddela Jr., Olongapo police director, said Castillo stabbed Briones 17 times using a 10-inch kitchen knife.

Maddela described the crime as "very alarming."

In sworn affidavits, witnesses said Briones and Castillo met at a drinking spree with friends in West Tapinac here on Aug. 14.

Hours later, the two went inside the house's bathroom and were heard talking.

Eugene Castillo, a nephew of the suspect and one of the witnesses, said he saw Briones and Castillo holding an aluminum foil and a lighter, which he suspected the two used in sniffing shabu, at around 4 a.m. that day.

But at past 5 a.m. that day, the witnesses heard Briones shouting inside the bathroom and asking for help. Her friends heard her shouting, "*Ayaw ko na* (I don?t like it anymore)!"

A few minutes later, witnesses saw Castillo leaving the bathroom with bloodied hands.

Bautista said after Castillo left, he saw the bloodied Briones slumped on the bathroom floor.

Investigators found a plastic sachet containing suspected shabu residue, five pieces of crumpled aluminum foil and a lighter inside Briones' pocket. A kitchen knife was also recovered from the bathroom. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Bishop condemns arrest of 32 environmentalists

SIOCON, Zamboanga del Norte—Dipolog Bishop Jose Manguiran condemned the arrests of 32 environmentalists who oppose the ongoing mining operations of the Toronto Ventures Inc. (TVI).

"This move will only encourage the people of Siocon to struggle, they were just protecting the environment," said Manguiran, who was present when the warrants of arrest was served to 32 environmentalists on Aug. 12.

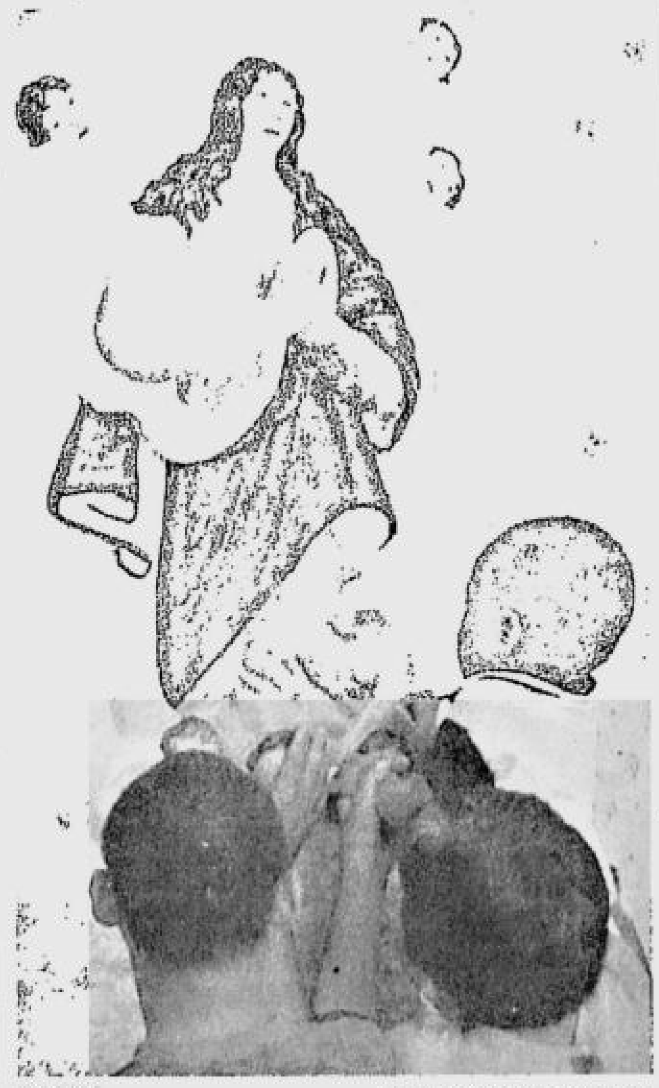
Manguiran said it was not only the local police force that displayed bias in favor of the mining firm but also President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

He also accused DENR personnel of "creating un-peace" in Siocon when they granted a permit to operate to TVI.

"In some way, the government is responsible for this trouble, only the government could resolve this problem," he said.

Godofredo Galos, the president of the Save Paradise Movement in Siocon, also condemned the arrests.

"Do you call a person criminal if he is protecting the environment from degradation?" Galos asked. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



FAITH

RYAN ROSAURO/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Catholics in Tangub City queue to touch an image of the Virgin Mary, a practice that has been passed on from one generation to another among the faithful.

Pope's envoy to lead ordination of bishop

SAN PABLO CITY—Pope John Paul II's representative to the Philippines will lead cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons and thousands of members of the laity in the episcopal ordination of a Laguna cleric tomorrow.

The Pope's ambassador to the Philippines, Most Rev. Antonio Franco, will preside at the Concelebrated Eucharist and Episcopal Ordination rituals for Bishop-elect Msgr. Bernardino Cortez, HP (Honorary Prelate) at 10 a.m., Friday at the Cathedral of St. Paul the First Hermit, this city.

Cortez is the parish priest of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños until his episcopal ordination.

He was appointed recently by Pope John Paul II as auxiliary bishop for the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Manila following his ordination.

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines throughout the country will be on hand to attend the ordination.

There are about 118 cardinals, archbishops and bishops in the country, according to the CBCP Directory in year 2002.

Hundreds of diocesan, religious priests and deacons from the host diocese of Laguna; archdioceses of Manila and Lipa, Batangas; dioceses of Lucena City, Gumaca, Quezon and Antipolo City in Rizal; prelature of Infanta and elsewhere are expected to show up for the elaborate Concelebrated Mass and ordination rituals.

After his ordination, Cortez will become the third member of the episcopacy who are either member of the San Pablo clergy or trace their roots in the province of Laguna. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

De Oro power rate hike questioned

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The city government is questioning the 57-centavo power rate increase being implemented by the Cagayan de Oro Electric Power and Light Co. (Cepalco).

The city government would file a case at the Court of Appeals to question the rate increase.

Councilor Benjamin Benaldo, who flew to Manila on Tuesday to file the case, said Cepalco has been blaming the new rate on the Energy Regulatory Commission's order for unbundling of power rates.

He said city officials could not understand why unbundling the power rates, which is simply breaking down into details the payments consumers should make, could cause any rate increase.

Benaldo said Cepalco was only using the unbundling of power rates as an excuse because the increase was illegal.

He said the power firm filed a petition before the ERC in December 2001 asking for a rate increase, which officials had vigorously opposed. They recently learned the petition was approved.

City officials said even if Cepalco needed the increase, the process by which this was granted was illegal because no consultation was made.

"Under the Epira Law, the ERC is mandated to hold public hearings on planned rate increases, not hide it from us. This is a clear violation," said Benaldo. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Public works chief's ma dies at 85

FLORA Medina Soriquez, mother of Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez, died on Aug. 15 at the age of 85.

Her remains lie at the Nacional Memorial Homes on Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

Burial is scheduled on Saturday, Aug. 21, at the Eternal Gardens Memorial Park in Caloocan City after a 1 p.m. Mass.

Her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request readers to pray for the repose of her soul.

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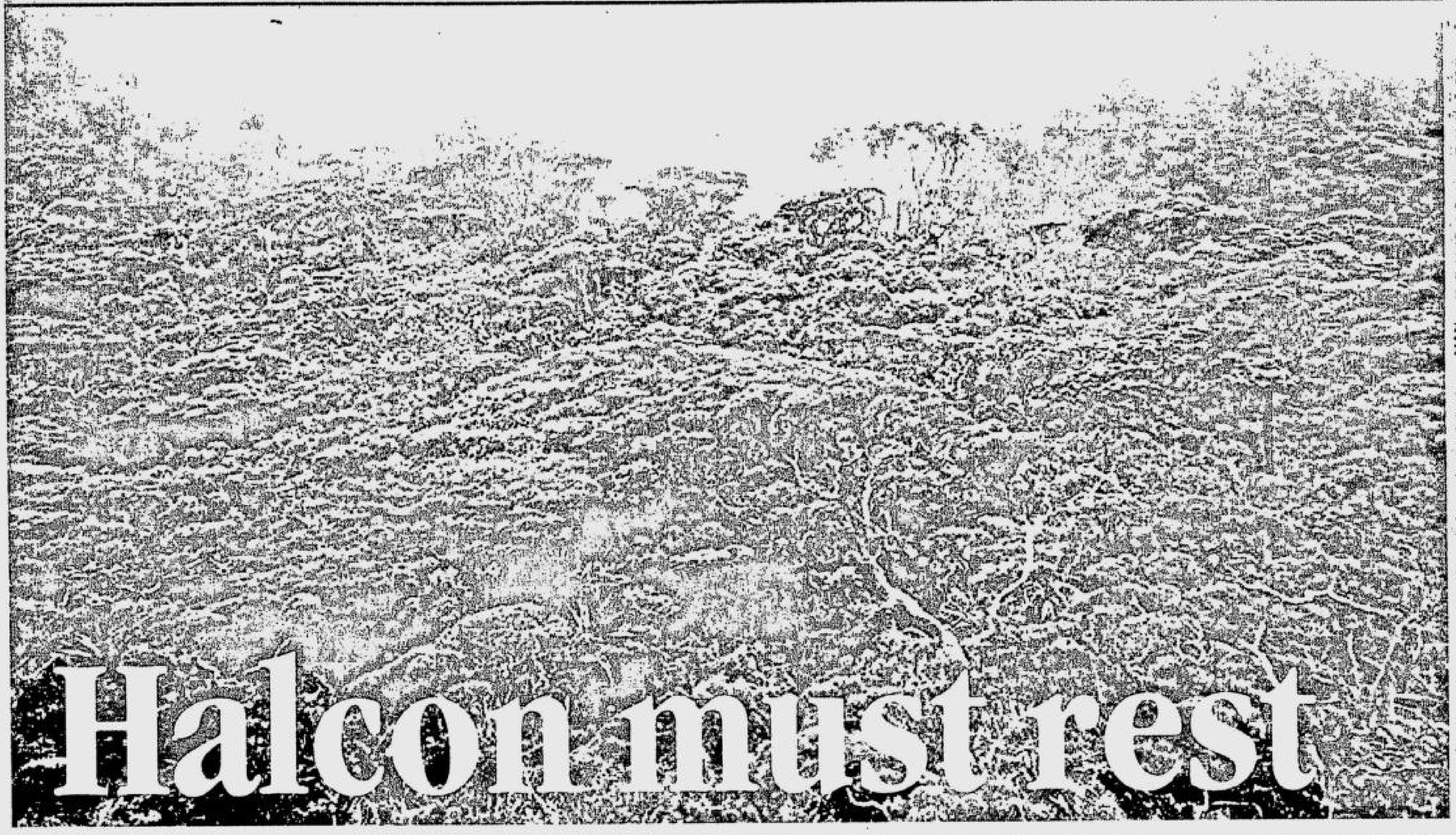


Halcon must rest

DIVERSE scrub in 1995 (above) is now completely replaced by sedges (below). Tree ghosts are found at Halcon's eastern summit ridge some 2000 meters above sea level.

EFREN GARCELLANO AND EMELINDA MANDIA

By Madonna T. Virola
Calapan City

IN A SPAN of 10 years, botanist Emelina Mandia, a Mindoreña and a professor at the De La Salle University in Manila, has witnessed the rapid changes in Mount Halcon's summit landscape.

"In the early 1900s, the actual summit had a dense growth of stunted trees festooned with five to 15 inches of moss. Now, it has ... very low growing vegetation, with considerable [portions of] completely barren areas," Mandia said in an e-mail to the INQUIRER.

"The extensive fire that took place in 1998 in the so-called '*kaplaan*' area (at 1,950 to 2,250 meters above sea level) resulted in the complete replacement of the very extensive and highly diverse open heath and elfin woods that we observed in 1995 by mostly sedges and grasses. The many standing tree ghosts along the edge of the now much limited subalpine forest are haunting signs of that inferno.

"We also documented isolated, less extensive fires on separate ridges during the 2004 expedition," she added.

During her April-May expedition to the summit, Mandia noticed stamped mounds of *Oreobolus ambiguus* on the spot where a group of mountaineers had pitched a tent.

"This is a very rare sedge found only on Halcon among Philippine mountains and only on the highest mountains in Borneo, Southwest Celebes and New Guinea," she said.

Photos taken of the mountain 10 years ago and this year show these changes.

"If a five-year climbing moratorium has been given to Mt. Banahaw, Halcon, too, deserves the same considerate attention," said Mandia.

Not much had been reported on Halcon, and Mandia shared with the INQUIRER the plight of the third-highest mountain in the country, with an urgent call for its conservation. (The highest mountain is Mt. Apo in Davao and the second, Mt. Pulag, is in the Cordillera.)

Halcon experience

Halcon is part of the Halcon Range that divides Mindoro Island into two provinces—Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro.

The large rivers flowing from the range support lowland agriculture and industries. The forests that maintain the rivers, though exploited, still provide sanctuary for the Mangyan.

The ascent to Halcon takes Mandia two to three days of "almost continuous vertical climbs and steep descents, holding only onto branches and exposed roots, fording rivers, passing along steep cliffs and rocky walls and being bitten by forest leeches," she said.

Mandia's first stay on the summit zone from April to May in 1995 made her appreciate and understand Halcon more deeply. Before, she only knew of the mountain from the 1907 accounts of American botanists Merrill, Copeland, Ames and Brotherus, based on collections by Elmer D. Merrill, who first successfully scaled it in 1906.

Mandia graduated from the Divine Word College of Calapan and became a professor at the DLSU Biology Department where she completed a Master of Science degree in biology and a Doctor of Philosophy with specialization in botany.

In the past, Halcon presented a lot of mystery and uniqueness, both geologically and biologically, to Mandia.

Before scaling its summit, she conducted an ethnobotanical study of the Alangan Mangyan folk on the lower slopes.

> 'The greatest threat in Mt. Halcon's summit zone is fire because of its vegetation. A single lighted cigarette, when fanned by strong wind, can devastate the entire ridge'

She described the summit: "It is an assemblage of unique tropical alpine flora much similar to those occurring on the highest mountains in Borneo, Java, Sumatra and New Guinea. Many rare and interesting plants such as the sundews, pitcher plants, ground and epiphytic orchids, ferns, clubmosses, bryophytes, heaths, irids, lilies, sedges, gymnosperms and lichens grow abundantly on this peak. Most of them are narrow endemics, either Australia, Asiatic or Malesian in origin and distribution."

About eight plant species are found only in Halcon.

"The summit is not really well explored as our expeditions (in 1994, 1995 and 2004) yielded a number of new plant records, not only for Mindoro but for the Philippines as well, and certain species new to science whose proper identification and description are currently being worked on," said Mandia.

Critical area

Halcon holds the most extensive open heath vegetation among Philippine mountains, she said. Pulag, on the other hand, supports an alpine grassland dominated by the dwarf bamboo *Yushania niitakayamensis*, while Apo has a community of kremnophytes or volcanic plants.

Halcon has been listed among the six extremely high critical areas for conservation in Mindoro as assessed by over 300 local and international experts in the 2001 Philippine Biodiversity Priority Setting Workshop. Considerations were high biodiversity, endemism and degrees of threat.

As early as 1907, it had been thought that Halcon was probably the one part that has remained constantly above water during disturbances that, from time to time, submerge portions of the Philippine archipelago, related Mandia.

The greatest threat in the summit zone is fire because of the nature of its vegetation: easily drying sedges, grass, ground moss, as well as highly resinous woody species, she said.

A single lighted cigarette, she said, when fanned by strong wind that prevails on the ozone, can devastate the entire ridge, she said. Other threats are extraction of forest products, particularly rattan, *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) and unregulated mountaineering activities.

Call

Those passing though the Strong Republic Nautical Highway in Oriental Mindoro are greeted by the Mahalta (for Mangyan, Halcon and Tamaraw) signboard, proof that the three are unique treasures of Mindoro.

Mandia noted that while several organizations were involved in assisting the Mangyans and attending to the tamaraws, there was no exclusive organization for Halcon, except for several mountaineers who volunteer to raise public consciousness about the condition of the mountain.

"Isn't it high time that we, Mindoreños, take Halcon more seriously and work for its effective conservation?" the botanist asked.

Mandia is currently involved in conservation efforts on the island through the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation and Development Foundation Inc.

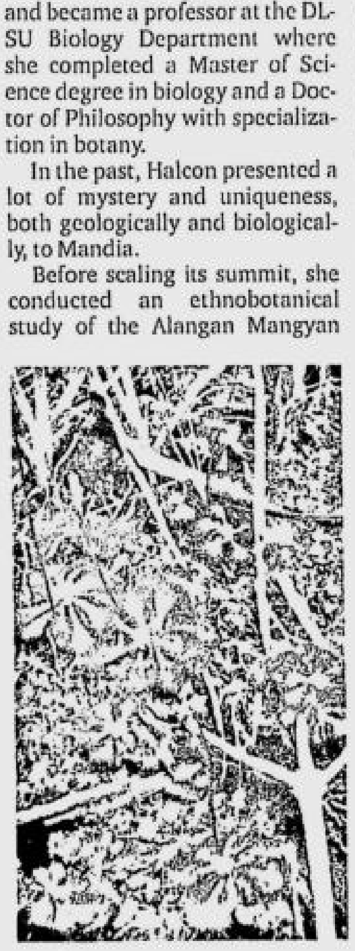
While the yearly Halcon climb provides a venue for developing awareness and appreciation of the mountain, Mandia said "it should be temporarily closed until such a time that more habitat-based information could be given and rules and regulations formulated and can be strictly implemented for more meaningful, well-guided and with the least impact visits."

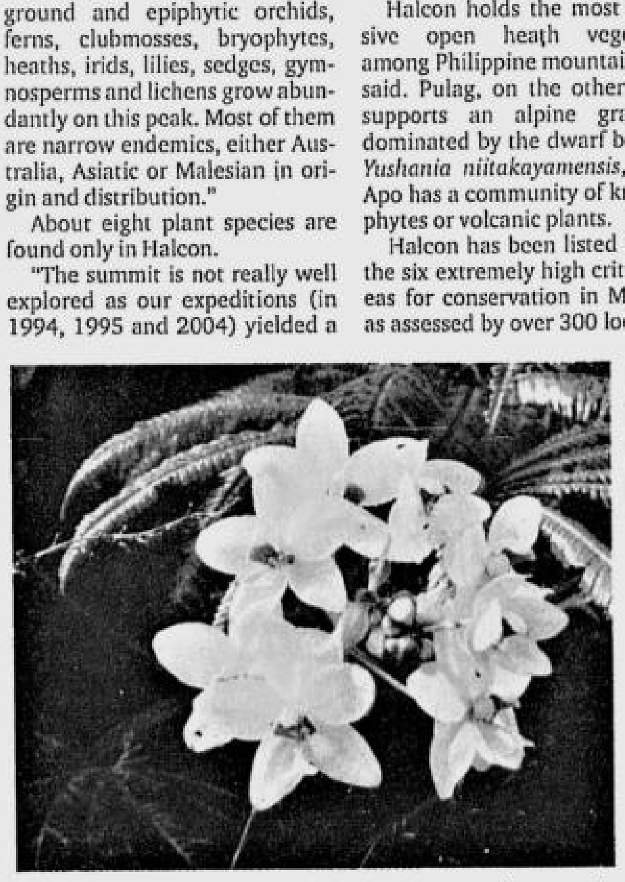
Among the steps that people can take to conserve Halcon are:

- Be fully aware of the uniqueness of these environments and their vulnerability to fire.
- Care for the Mangyans by developing alternative livelihoods for them so they would not rely so much on *kaingin* and gathering forest products for subsistence.
- Refrain from buying orchids, ferns, lycopods and other plants obtained from the forest and usually sold by the Mangyan folk because this only encourages their depletion, but understand their needs so they won't go home empty-handed.
- Extend any help to the Mangyans, particularly the Alangan Mangyans.
- Push for reforms and resolution in the seeming conflict between ancestral domain claims and protection of natural environment.
- Actively guard forests from all logging activities.

Only less than six percent of the country's forest cover is left, she said. Now is the time to seriously heal our mountains, but there is an equally serious need to be wary of exotic reforestation species.

Mandia, together with environmentalist-photographer-artist Efren Garcellano and others, is preparing a pictorial field guide to Halcon summit flora in order to create deeper awareness and appreciation of the unique plants growing on Mount Halcon. The guide is expected to be available by next year.





RARE plants on Halcon (from left): Carnivorous plants sundew, ground orchid and primitive fern and pitcher plant.

EFREN GARCELLANO AND EMELINDA MANDIA

Joey left city deep in debt, says mayor

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A CITY plunged in debt.

This was how Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe described the city's present financial crisis, stressing that the city government has to settle P946.8 million in debts left by the past administration.

Bernabe said the "gargantuan obligations" left by former Mayor Joey Marquez included bank loans, including interest and surcharges, and overdue payments to contractors and suppliers for various infrastructure projects and supplies.

The staggering debt also included payables to other local government units, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and several barangay.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Marquez for comment, but he could not be reached.

"The past administration spent a lot on office and sports supplies, and maintenance and operating expenses for City Hall," Bernabe said.

An unaudited financial statement prepared by the city accountant shown to the INQUIRER by Bernabe indicated that City Hall's debt alone amounted to P868 million.

The mayor added that their special education fund's liabilities had totaled P78.7 million.

"Sad to say, there was poor fiscal management, resulting in the city government's huge debts," the mayor said.

Bernabe said they are waiting for a report from the Commission on Audit that would determine if there were rampant anomalies under Marquez's administration.

"For now, I would have to focus on decreasing the city government's expenses, and hope to increase our income and collect receivables," Bernabe said.

The receivables included the Manila International Airport's P826 million debt and Public Estates Authority accounts amounting to P600 million.

Bernabe said he had called for austerity measures to decrease city government expenses.

"We have to find ways to stem the financial hemorrhage even as we continue to deliver the most pressing basic services needed by our people, such as garbage collection, among other services," he said.

Hundreds of contractual and casual workers whose contracts expired on June 30 were not rehired to cut down manpower costs.

"Some of those whose contracts expired on June 30 have been with City Hall for several years. But given the very tight financial situation we are in, we have no better option than to let them go," Bernabe said.

To avoid unnecessary expenses, only the most important projects would be given priority, the mayor said.

"Hopefully, I don't commit the same mistakes, so my successor would not be in the position I am in now," Bernabe added.

BERNABE

Flood project behind schedule

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE CAMANAVA (Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) Flood Control Project is behind schedule. And some local officials are not happy.

More than a year after the project began in June 2003, only about 7.35 percent of the construction has been completed.

This is more than 2 percent short of the original target for the first year of construction, project director Ricardo Camacho told the INQUIRER.

Apart from settlers returning to previously cleared areas, the acquisition of affected private properties had also delayed the construction.

No excuse

Malabon City Mayor Canuto Oreta said there was no reason for the delay because the loan package had been available, and the clearing of affected areas had long been completed.

Part of the work on the P5-billion project, including the construction of river walls, dikes, floodgates and pumping stations, runs through private lots, fishponds and urban poor areas.

Camacho said the government was still working on the acquisition of the affected properties with private owners.

Optimistic

Illegal settlers remain in areas where construction should have started, and heavy rains in the past few weeks are also causing temporary delays, Camacho said.

But the mayor said he is optimistic the project would be completed by 2007 according to the original plan.

City information officer Abbi Balatbat told the INQUIRER that flooding had become more severe this year, so the project has to be completed as soon as possible.

In northern Metro Manila, flooded streets and homes are common sights each time the tide rises.

Flooding is aggravated when heavy rains coincide with the rising tide.

HIDDEN WEALTH JOAN BONDOC

A boy holds up a coin which he found buried in the debris left behind by the fire that ravaged a shanty town along Agham Road in Quezon City on Monday.

This 'priest' chose the wrong victims

By Leila B. Salaverria

ENRICO Reyes had been passing himself off as a priest in government offices where he held Mass and asked for donations from officials, including National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco, until he was found out.

Yesterday, Reyes, 31, was presented before the media by some of his victims at the NBI apart from Wycoco: Nestor Mantaring, deputy director for investigative service; Ruel Lasala, chief of the Reaction, Arrest and Interdiction Division; and Vicente de Guzman Jr., chief of the Special Action Unit.

Frequent visitor

All four officials had given an undetermined amount of cash to Reyes, who had introduced himself as a priest, and had asked for donations for his feeding program, Wycoco said.

Reyes had also frequented jails and other government offices, including the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), using the same ploy.

Lasala, who met Reyes at the PDEA, became suspicious when Reyes had been unusually persistent in his requests for donations.

The NBI then made inquiries from the Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, who said there was no priest by that name in their list.

Motive

De Guzman, on the other hand, said Reyes had approached him in July and said he was a priest engaged in missionary work who needed money to feed poor children.

When Reyes came back to collect, De Guzman told him they already knew that he was not a priest.

A weeping Reyes told reporters yesterday that he had posed as a priest because he only wanted to help other people, adding that he had not used the money for his personal gain.

A charge of estafa had been filed against Reyes in the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

Ivler cop escorts face raps

By Christian V. Esguerra and Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL police leadership yesterday ordered the filing of criminal and administrative charges against two of its officers for their alleged role in the aborted escape of Freddie Aguilar's nephew.

If found guilty, Supt. Antonio Gumiran of the directorate for operations and Senior Insp. Jeff Briones Uy of the Special Action Force could be dismissed from the service, said Deputy Director Gen. Edgar Aglipay, the PNP's No. 2 man.

"We are not condoning the actions of these officers," Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP spokesperson, said in a statement.

"Their involvement is purely on their own personal capacity. They should face the consequences of their actions."

Gumiran and Uy allegedly tried to help Jason Aguilar Ivler, 22, out of the country through the Zamboanga City port.

Ivler, the Filipino-American nephew of folk singer Freddie Aguilar, is being blamed for the death in a car accident of Undersecretary Nestor Ponce last Aug. 8.

Meanwhile, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is pushing for the cancellation of the P30,000 bail granted to Ivler.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco yesterday said its ex-parte motion to oppose Ivler's bail was already being heard in the sala of Judge Rowena Modesta San Pedro of the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Holiday declared to commemorate Quezon

A SPECIAL non-working holiday has been declared in Quezon City as the locality commemorates the 126th birth anniversary of the late president.

City officials announced that public and private employees, as well as students, could take the day off to remember President Manuel L. Quezon.

Mayor Sonny Belmonte will be accompanied by Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. in leading the celebration at the Quezon Memorial Shrine at 8 a.m.

Villar said government officials should emulate the patriotism of Quezon, one of the founders of the Nacionalista Party who always thought of the welfare of the country.

Public officials should follow the example of Quezon in formulating national policies that would serve the interest of the Filipino people, said Villar, current Nacionalista Party president.

He said public officials should be reminded of Quezon's legacy and his famous line that moved the country, "My loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins."

Villar vowed to revitalize the Nacionalista Party and breed a new generation of statesmen who will espouse the ideals, values and patriotism of Quezon.

He said party officials and members shall be guided by the party's philosophy, "Ang Bayan Higit sa Lahat," in formulating national policies that would have a great impact on the Filipino people.

Joining the ceremonies are Zenaida Quezon Avanceña, city officials and various civic groups.

METROBRIEFS

Alphans fellowship

THE ALPHA Phi Beta Chancery will hold its monthly fellowship meeting on Aug. 20 at Roces Room, Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan. The meeting will be hosted by Batch '63 Alphans. The Chancery is composed of the alumni members of the Alpha Phi Beta Fraternity of the University of the Philippines. One of the Chancery's projects is a scholarship program which helps needy students take undergraduate and law courses at UP.

Manila's new bishop

MONSIGNOR Bernardino C. Cortez, auxiliary bishop-elect of the Archdiocese of Manila, would be ordained to the episcopacy on Friday at 10 a.m. at the St. Paul I Hermit Cathedral in San Pablo City. Manila Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales would officiate. Cortez will be installed auxiliary bishop on Aug. 28, 9 a.m. at the Manila Cathedral.

Buan-Santiago; 44

ELVIRA Buan-Santiago died on Aug. 16, 2004, after a lingering illness due to cervical cancer. She was 44. She is survived by parents Esteban and Precing Buan, husband Danny, daughters Debbie and Diana, brothers Mher, Glenn and Gordon, and sisters Irma and Simbilin. Her body lies at the family home in Mapalad, Arayat, Pampanga. Interment will be on Aug. 21, 8 a.m. at the Cabiao Catholic Cemetery, in Nueva Ecija.

Billions lost to graft

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SEN. JUAN Ponce Enrile is right: Why should the citizenry be burdened with new taxes when the government is inefficient in collecting revenues?

Enrile's comment comes after an INQUIRER report that collection cases filed by the Bureau of Customs against firms that fraudulently acquired tax credit certificates (TCCs) totaling P1 billion had been dismissed by the courts because the bureau did not pursue them.

TCCs are refund payments by the government on duties and taxes paid by export companies for imported materials they use. The TCCs, which were transferable, were sold by forgers to export firms that never paid any taxes and duties to the customs bureau and, therefore, were not supposed to claim refunds.

The tax credit irregularity is just one of many cases of inefficiency by the Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), government's primary revenue collecting agencies.

The government doesn't need new taxes to make up for the budget deficit. What it needs is a highly efficient tax collection system.

* * *

Ask any businessman who is visited by BIR agents for deficient tax payments.

The delinquent businessman will tell you—off the record, of course—that the taxman would demand money for himself first before making the tax evader pay taxes to the government. Almost always, the taxman or woman would make a compromise with the tax cheat for him to pay the government only half of the taxes due, and divide the other half between himself and the tax evader. Neat, isn't it?

That's "SOP" (standard operating procedure) among BIR revenue collectors.

Billions of pesos are lost by the government every year in that SOP.

By the way, SOP is no longer an innocent term as it used to be where corrupt government men are concerned. SOP now means "for the boys."

* * *

I received a note from a friend, lawyer Vicente Chuidian, who waxed poetic about the Manila of yesteryears.

Here's his moving piece:

"Those of us who remember Manila from long ago, remember her and remember her dreams, and we miss her sorely, as we miss the rest of the country, even though we live here. Manila was a stunningly attractive young woman, intellectually evolved, compassionate and spiritual. She was the Pasig River then, as pure as she was, when she first descended the streams and rivulets of the Sierra Madre foothills. She was Dewey Boulevard in the late afternoons, when the setting sun roosted in the branches of fire trees, golden mangoes, bursting tamarind, duhat, santols, coconut trees and palms, bougainvilleas, towering acacias and every pastel shade of flower and flowering grasses. And lovers strolled along as did families and friends, dreaming their dreams of a happy future, there was no fear, no terror in their lives. Manila was the Escolta in early mornings, where multilingual traders mingled their cups of coffee as they spoke in eloquent Spanish, English, Tagalog, Amoy and sprinklings of every major dialect. The day was about to begin in the business district, and honor was the standard, not profit. Yes, we would work hard, but we would only earn as much as we knew we deserved, no more, no less. There was *delicadeza*, *palabra de honor*, *caballerezca*, *hiya*, *pag-galang*, *budhi* and all other words that spoke of gentler times, kinder times. The services worked, the government served, people respected one another. That was so very long ago. Will Manila ever return to the way she was for the most? Do past times and places ever resurrect, like the Christ, or like fields of flowers after monsoon rains?

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Bidding Date and Time: **01 SEPTEMBER 2004 at 10:00 A.M.**
Place: **Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-Story Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila**

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers
2. Y2003 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet)
3. Y2003 Income Tax Return
4. Taxpayer's Identification Number
5. Valid and Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
6. Prospective bidder's computation for its Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts, or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend to it a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current assets – Current liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K = 10
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy or a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original
10. Sworn affidavit of the bidder that he or she or any officer of their corporation is not related to the Head of the Procuring Entity by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree
11. Proof that the contractor has at least five (5) years experience in landscape maintenance and servicing of indoor and outdoor plants
12. Copies of at least two (2) existing contracts with other clients involving a total lawn area of at least 5,000 sq m.
13. Proof that the contractor has its own plant nursery or has a regular supplier of ornamental plants, grass and other landscape materials to ensure a continuous and uninterrupted service in the Bank
14. Inventory of garden equipment and tools
15. DOLE Certification that the firm has complied with all labor rules and regulations
16. SSS Certification that the firm has regularly remitted contributions of its employees as of 30 April 2004

Envelope No. 2:

1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Duly accomplished Certification/ Undertaking
3. Original Bid Security

Envelope No. 3:

Price Proposal with attached cost breakdown

All envelopes shall be dropped in bid box located at Room MR2A, 5-Story Building, BSP Main Complex. **LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

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Ricardo C. Asin, Manila

Robbers kill Japanese trader

By Leila B. Salaverria

ALL THAT Japanese businessman Masashi Matsuura wanted was to reunite with his four children. But it will never happen.

The 42-year-old trader, a distributor of slot machines known as "pachinko," was shot dead in front of three of his children and a niece as he sat handcuffed inside a van in Manila on Tuesday night.

Matsuura was gunned down by one of four men in what police described as an unusual robbery case that could include his estranged wife in the investigation.

According to SPO3 William Gondranios, the businessman, with his two sons, aged 10 and 13, arrived in the country early Tuesday evening from Nagoya, Japan.

They came to the country to be reunited with Matsuura's two daughters aged 7 and 16.

A relative told the police that Matsuura and his Filipino wife, Alice, earlier had a marital spat and the woman took their two daughters to the Philippines, where they are staying with relatives in Tarlac.

Alice is in Japan.

Upon arrival, Matsuura and his sons were fetched at the airport by his brother-in-law Ike Manuel, his 16-year-old daughter and a niece.

As they were travelling along Roxas Boulevard in a blue Kia Pregio van , a dark Ford Escort blocked their path.

Three men in black shirts and police caps, armed with handguns and rifles got down from the Ford and commandeered the Kia.

Manuel, who was driving the van, reportedly managed to run away when one of the suspects opened the door on the driver's side.

Matsuura was handcuffed in the back of the van as the suspects drove to San Andres Street in Malate, Manila, where the victims' luggage, cash and valuables were transferred to the Ford Escort driven by a fourth suspect.

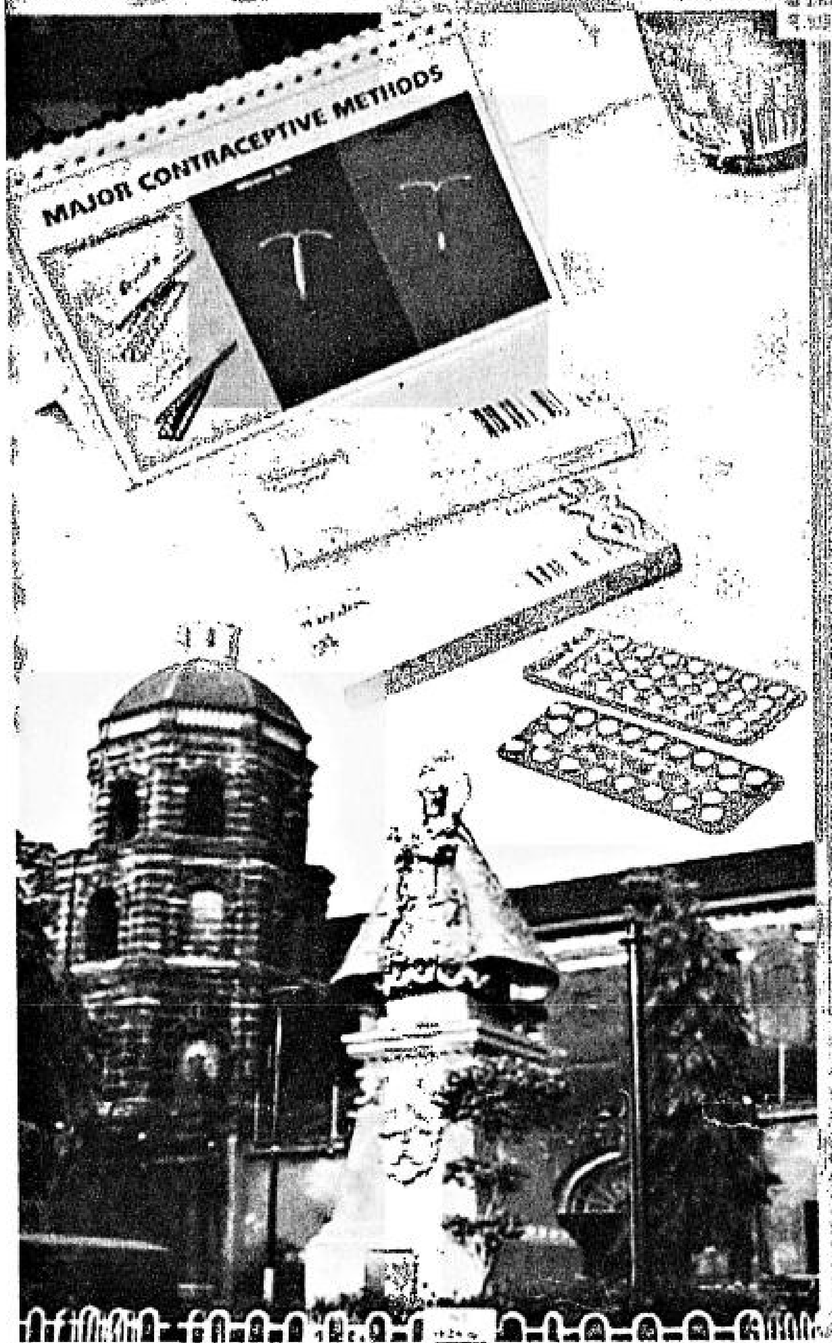
The victims were driven to the corner of Quirino Avenue and Singalong Street, where one of the gunmen shot Matsuura with an automatic rifle before fleeing. His children and niece were unharmed. By then, it was already 11:40 p.m.

Gondranios said the incident might not be a mere case of robbery. He said the police were checking the possible involvement of his wife.

"If the motive was robbery, then there was no need to kill the victim," police said.

Severina, a sister of Alice, told the police that on the day the Matsuuras arrived, the wife allegedly insisted on knowing the plate number of the van that would fetch them.

Alice also reportedly told her relatives not to allow her two daughters to fetch their father.



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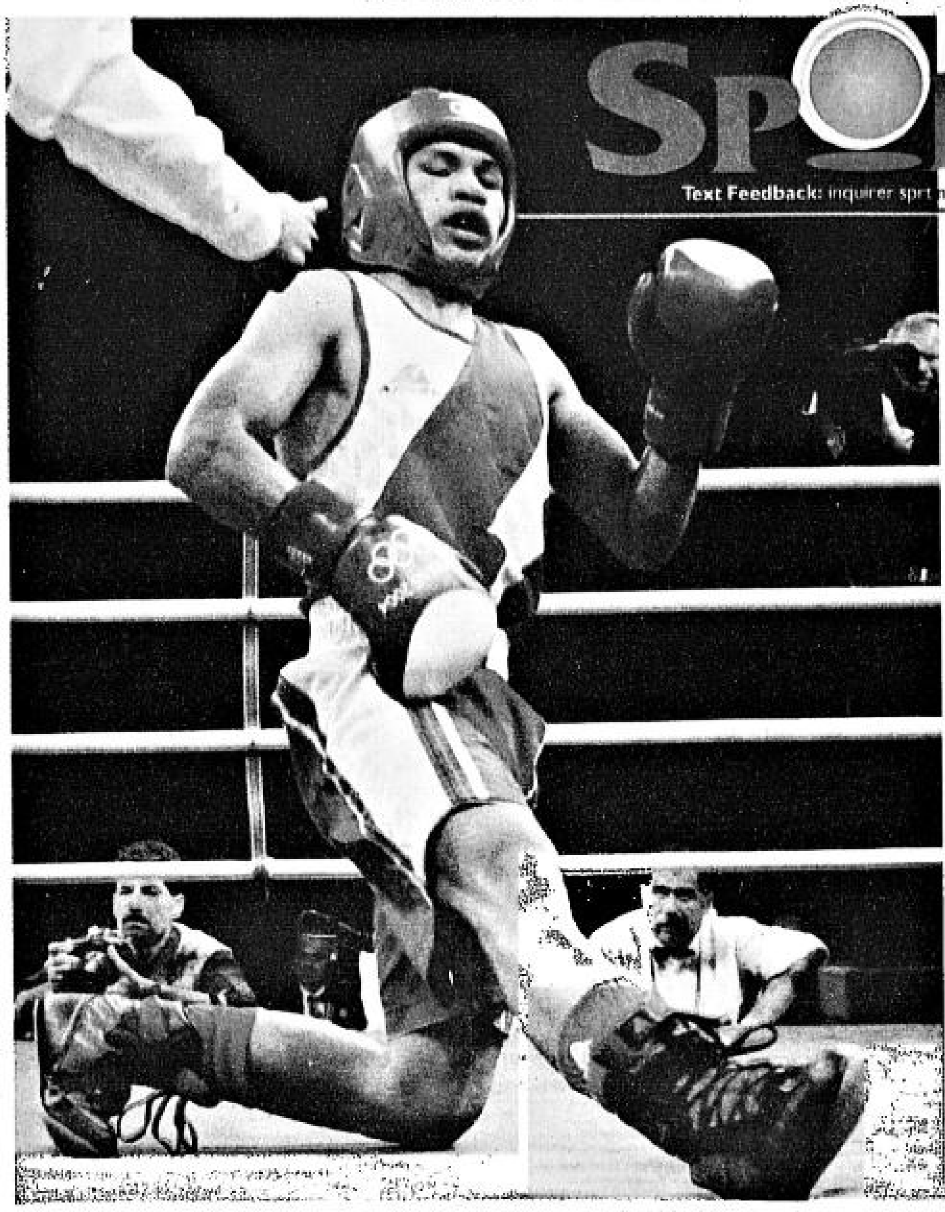

VIOLITO Payla struggles to get up after being knocked down by Tulashboy Doniyorov in the second round of their flyweight encounter. AP

Joining parade not good for RP athletes

IT doesn't pay to ignore doctor's orders.

Coaches and team leaders who did not heed Philippine delegation medical director Jose Raul Canlas' advise found this out in the ongoing Athens Olympics.

Canlas had dissuaded Filipino officials from letting the athletes participate in the inaugural parade, reasoning that: Joining the parade is tiring. You waste several hours you should normally spend resting and sleeping even if you're seated while resting.

But he was ignored.

Swimming coach Anthony Lozada even admitted Tuesday that he's more concerned with his athletes' getting the rare experience of joining the opening ceremony than preserving their energy for a good performance.

US-based swimmers Miguel Mendoza and Raphael Chua, joined the parade and were not able to improve on their personal best times.

RP

(All times Manila time)
Thursday, August 19, 2004
Boxing Peristeri Olympic Boxing Hall
(Light welterweight, 64 kg,
Round of 16; 1:30 a.m. Thursday)
Romeo Brin vs Manus Boonjumnong, Thailand

ATHENS 2004

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Brin seeks repeat over Thai /A18
■ US struggles past Greece /A19

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Payla kisses canvas, loses Olympic bid

By Artemio T. Engracia Jr.
News Editor

ATHENS—Gloom descended on the Philippine delegation Tuesday night as another medal hope fell flat on his face in the boxing competition of the 28th Olympic Games here.

A glass-jawed Violito Payla got a close-up look at the canvas of the Peristeri Olympic Boxing Hall when a stronger and more skillful Tulashboy Doniyorov of Uzbekistan knocked him down in the second round of their flyweight bout en route to a points decision over the Filipino.

A flick of a well-timed left uppercut by Doniyorov caught Payla flush on the chin for an ignominious second-round knockdown from which he never recovered. The Filipino came out fighting in the fourth and final round before losing a 36-26 points decision.

Defeat written all over his face, Payla walked out of the dressing room with his head bowed and refused to be interviewed. Again, it was boxing leader Gemiliano Lopez Jr. who spoke for the boxer after the fight.

"*Talagang talo. Naunahan tayo sa* strategy (We lost clean. We lost out in the strategy)," conceded Lopez.

Payla thus joined middleweight Christopher Camat, first round points loser to Russia's Gadarbek Gaydarbekov, in the sidelines of the competition, leaving only two other boxers to carry the Philippines' medal hopes in the Olympics.

Light flyweight Harry Tañamor, the brightest hope to win the country's first ever gold medal in the Olympics, was to fight Sherali Dostiev of Tajikistan in the first round at 8:15 Wednesday night (1:15 a.m. Thursday in Manila).

At the Olympic Aquatic Center, two Filipino swimmers were eliminated in their heats.

Jaclyn Pangilinan topped the first of five heats in the women's 200-meter breaststroke to finish 20th overall in a field of 32.

She clocked two minutes and 33.38 seconds, surpassing her previous best of 2:34.00 and her Olympic qualifying time of 2:35.01.

PAYLA/ A18

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FIGUEROA

Figueroa's next target: Beijing Games

ATHENS—The morning after her heart-rending round-of-16 setback in the Athens Olympics here, the sweet smile is back on archer Jasmin Figueroa's face. She's now looking forward to the Beijing Olympics.

"Okay na po ako ngayon," said the 19-year-old Figueroa early Wednesday morning, just before she resumed her training with coach Henry Manalang. *"Tapos na po akong umiyak at nakalimutan ko na rin ang pagkatalo ko. Ngayon,* I'm more determined to work harder *para makasali uli sa* Olympics."

The 5-foot-3 Tondo lass, who dropped a 150-152 decision to World University Games silver medalist Almudena Gallardo of Spain after shocking former world No. 3 and record-holder Natalia Valeeva of Italy, 132-130, in the round of 32, expressed satisfaction with her performance.

"I'm happy and what I'll always remember is my performance. *Hindi ko inaasahan pero maganda ang kinalabasan,"* explained the University of Makati physical education sophomore.

Her worry is she might lose her scholarship because she stopped schooling to prepare for the Olympic Games here. She's hoping Mayor (Jejomar) Binay can help her resume her studies.

"I have to continue my training *para hindi mawala ang* form ko," said Figueroa. "I also want to keep watching other archers so I can learn a lot from them."

Before coming here, Figueroa was ranked only third among the RP female archers behind Jennifer Chan and Rachel Anne Cabral, a 19-year-old like her.

But after finishing 27th here, she now easily ranks as the best in the land. Jasmin achieved her goal of, improving Chan's 58th place finish in the Sydney Olympics four years ago and also surpassed the 37th ranking of Francisco Naranjilla Jr. in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

She has come a long way since she first competed in the world championships in New York and the Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam last year. She managed to score only 1215 points from the 30-, 50-, 60- and 70-meter distances in New York and 1278 in the SEAG.

She has learned valuable lessons from her Olympic experience, which she hopes would guide her as she continues to aspire for excellence in future meets.

SAMSUNG

Brin seeks repeat over Thai

By Artemio T. Engracia Jr.

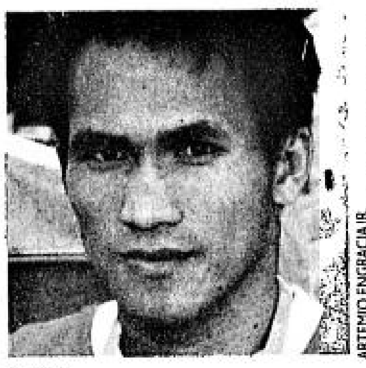
ATHENS—Romeo Brin has confidence in his abilities. He also has faith in divine intervention.

With this, the Filipino welterweight tries to make it to the quarterfinals of the boxing competition on Thursday when he takes on Thailand's Manus Boonjumnong at the Peristeri Oympic Boxing Hall.

Still licking the wounds of his previous battle, Brin expressed confidence he has what it takes to beat his Thai opponent, whom he has beaten once.

"I'll do everything," Brin said in Filipino. "'I'll leave the rest to the one above."

A deeply religious man, Brin is the only Filipino boxer who has so far gone past the first round. Teammates Christopher Camat and Violito Payla lost their first round bouts and Harry Tañamor was still to fight his first round match against Tajikistan's Sherali Dostiev at press time Wednesday night.



ARTEMIO ENGRACIA JR.

BRIN

The veteran Brin, who was plucked out of retirement when the Philippine slot for the light welterweight (64 kg) class became vacant during the Olympic qualifying tournament in Puerto Princesa last January, said he is still recovering from his previous fight.

"My body is still aching all over," said Brin, who pulled out a points victory over the tough and taller Patrick Bogere of Sweden in their first round fight on Sunday.

Brin is sporting a bruise on the left side of the bridge of his nose, an injury he sustained while mixing it up with Bogere in the fourth and final round of that fight.

The Filipino was leading when Bogere made a last-ditch charge. The final round brawl resulted in a knockdown that virtually assured Brin of a victory.

"I didn't know I was leading," he said. "I thought I was behind, so I decided to mix it up."

Brin said he had been recovering and praying since that fight.

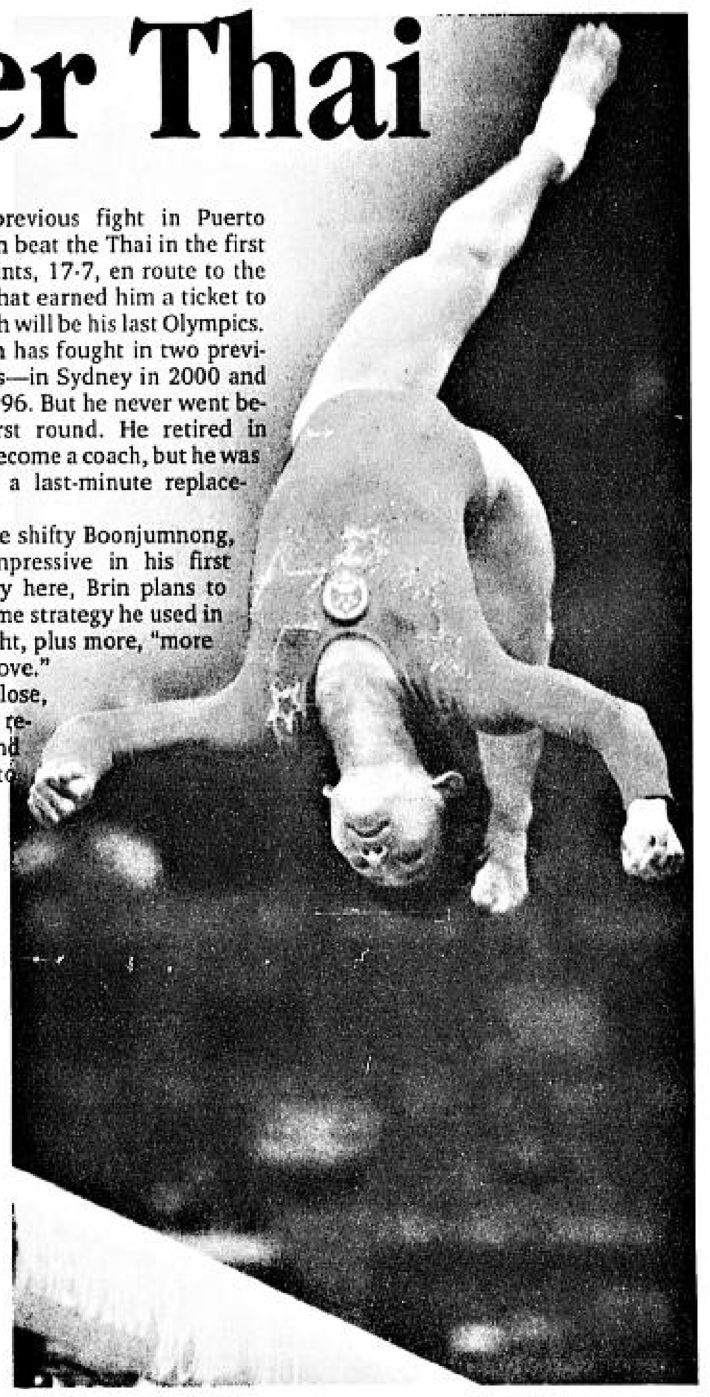
"I know I have a friend up there. I leave it up to Him," he said.

In their previous fight in Puerto Princesa, Brin beat the Thai in the first round on points, 17-7, en route to the gold medal that earned him a ticket to Athens, which will be his last Olympics.

At 31, Brin has fought in two previous Olympics—in Sydney in 2000 and Atlanta in 1996. But he never went beyond the first round. He retired in Palawan to become a coach, but he was called in as a last-minute replacement.

Against the shifty Boonjumnong, who was impressive in his first round victory here, Brin plans to adopt the same strategy he used in their first fight, plus more, "more help from above."

Win or lose, Brin plans to retire again and return to coaching.



CHINA'S Zhang Nan performs a routine on the balance beam during the artistic gymnastics women's team final. REUTERS

SPORTSWATCH

Havoline drivers eye key wins

COSETENG

MULTITITLED driver Jody Coseteng leads the charge of the powerhouse Havoline Racing Team when it guns for crucial victories in the 7th and 8th rounds of the Philippine National Touring Car Championships on Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit. Coseteng is within reach of the leaders in the premier N1 event of the BRC series with his aggregate of 45 points, behind the 52 of Rey Reyes and the 49 of Dominic Bon. The four-time Driver of the Year was at his best in the 5th and 6th rounds, which he ruled with ease, posting the fastest time of 1:50.796 in lap 2 with a total time of 47:18.046 in the final heat. "That was man and machine working in rhythm," said Coseteng, whose Honda Civic is finally fine-tuned to perfection.

Last call for enduro adventures

THE ENDURO San Mig Light Adventures, which flags off at noon on Friday at Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City, is sounding off its final call for those interested. Participants will undergo skill tests and equipment check from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. today at Power-up in Pasig to make sure that they have what it takes for the rigid workout that awaits them in the Manila leg. Eighty three-person teams in the elite and fun races will test their skills, strengths and stamina as they go through various challenges. Champion in the Elite Category will get P75,000 and other prizes. Call (632) 412-8660 or log on to www.sanmiglight.com.ph.

Sta. Elena off to hot start in Luzvimin

STA. Elena rode on Carina Ricamonte's 51 points to open up a 10-point spread over Manila Southwoods in the centerpiece Diamond division after yesterday's opening round of the 2004 WGAP-Luzvimin Golf Invitational tournament at the Cebu Country Club course. With Vinice Godio scoring a 45, Therese Dabao carding 42 and Rio Co adding a 41, Sta. Elena amassed 179 for the day against the 169 of Southwoods. Lily Chan (32) and Tami Leung (27) did not count for Sta. Elena. Scoring for Southwoods were national player Carmelette Villaroman with 49, Lora Roberto 46, Glenda Da Roza 40 and Claudette Garcia 34. Wack Wack, getting 47 points from Stephanie Yu, was running third after totaling 166.

Drilon Cup marks 137th anniversary

THE P1-million Philracom-sponsored "Senate President Franklin M. Drilon Cup the 26th 1867 Founders' Cup" marks MJCI's 137th founding anniversary on Aug. 29 at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite. Winner of the event will receive P600,000 and the replica of the Founders' Cup. The battle for supremacy of the country's top gallopers caps Manila Jockey Club's thrilling card of races for the week and serves as the main event for Sunday's 13-race program.

St. Francis, San Pedro grab lead

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Bautista, who received the belt donated by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, raised his unblemished record to 12 wins with 9 knockouts.

Altas regain mean form, down Stags

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE UNIVERSITY of Perpetual Help Altas finally recovered their winning form.

The Altas, who went through a three-game losing spell after topping the first round, overpowered the San Sebastian Stags, 70-65, in the 80th NCAA senior basketball tournament at the Makati Coliseum

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Sophomore Ramon Retaga Jr. finished with a game-high 19 points for PCU.

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Figueroa's next target: Beijing Games

FIGUEROA

ATHENS—The morning after her heart-rending round-of-16 setback in the Athens Olympics here, the sweet smile is back on archer Jasmin Figueroa's face. She's now looking forward to the Beijing Olympics.

"*Okay na po ako ngayon,*" said the 19-year-old Figueroa early Wednesday morning, just before she resumed her training with coach Henry Manalang. "*Tapos na po akong umiyak at nakalimutan ko na rin ang pagkatalo ko. Ngayon,* I'm more determined to work harder *para makasali uli sa* Olympics."

The 5-foot-3 Tondo lass, who dropped a 150-152 decision to World University Games silver medalist Almudena Gallardo of Spain after shocking former world No. 3 and record-holder Natalia Valeeva of Italy, 132-130, in the round of 32, expressed satisfaction with her performance.

"I'm happy and what I'll always remember is my performance. *Hindi ko inaasahan pero maganda ang kinalabasan,*" explained the University of Makati physical education sophomore.

Her worry is she might lose her scholarship because she stopped schooling to prepare for the Olympic Games here. She's hoping Mayor (Jejomar) Binay can help her resume her studies.

"I have to continue my training *para hindi mawala ang* form ko," said Figueroa. "I also want to keep watching other archers so I can learn a lot from them."

Before coming here, Figueroa was ranked only third among the RP female archers behind Jennifer Chan and Rachel Anne Cabral, a 19-year-old like her.

But after finishing 27th here, she now easily ranks as the best in the land. Jasmin achieved her goal of improving Chan's 58th place finish in the Sydney Olympics four years ago and also surpassed the 37th ranking of Francisco Naranjilla Jr. in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

She has come a long way since she first competed in the world championships in New York and the Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam last year. She managed to score only 1215 points from the 30-, 50-, 60- and 70-meter distances in New York and 1278 in the SEAG.

She has learned valuable lessons from her Olympic experience, which she hopes would guide her as she continues to aspire for excellence in future meets.

SAMSUNG

Brin seeks repeat over Thai

By Artemio T. Engracia Jr.

ATHENS—Romeo Brin has confidence in his abilities. He also has faith in divine intervention.

With this, the Filipino welterweight tries to make it to the quarterfinals of the boxing competition on Thursday when he takes on Thailand's Manus Boonjumnong at the Peristeri Oympic Boxing Hall.

Still licking the wounds of his previous battle, Brin expressed confidence he has what it takes to beat his Thai opponent, whom he has beaten once.

"I'll do everything," Brin said in Filipino. "'I'll leave the rest to the one above."

A deeply religious man, Brin is the only Filipino boxer who has so far gone past the first round. Teammates Christopher Camat and Violito Payla lost their first round bouts and Harry Tañamor was still to fight his first round match against Tajikistan's Sherali Dostiev at press time Wednesday night.

The veteran Brin, who was plucked out of retirement when the Philippine slot for the light welterweight (64 kg) class became vacant during the Olympic qualifying tournament in Puerto Princesa last January, said he is still recovering from his previous fight.

ARTEMIO ENGRACIA JR.

BRIN

"My body is still aching all over," said Brin, who pulled out a points victory over the tough and taller Patrick Bogere of Sweden in their first round fight on Sunday.

Brin is sporting a bruise on the left side of the bridge of his nose, an injury he sustained while mixing it up with Bogere in the fourth and final round of that fight.

The Filipino was leading when Bogere made a last-ditch charge. The final round brawl resulted in a knockdown that virtually assured Brin of a victory.

"I didn't know I was leading," he said. "I thought I was behind, so I decided to mix it up."

Brin said he had been recovering and praying since that fight.

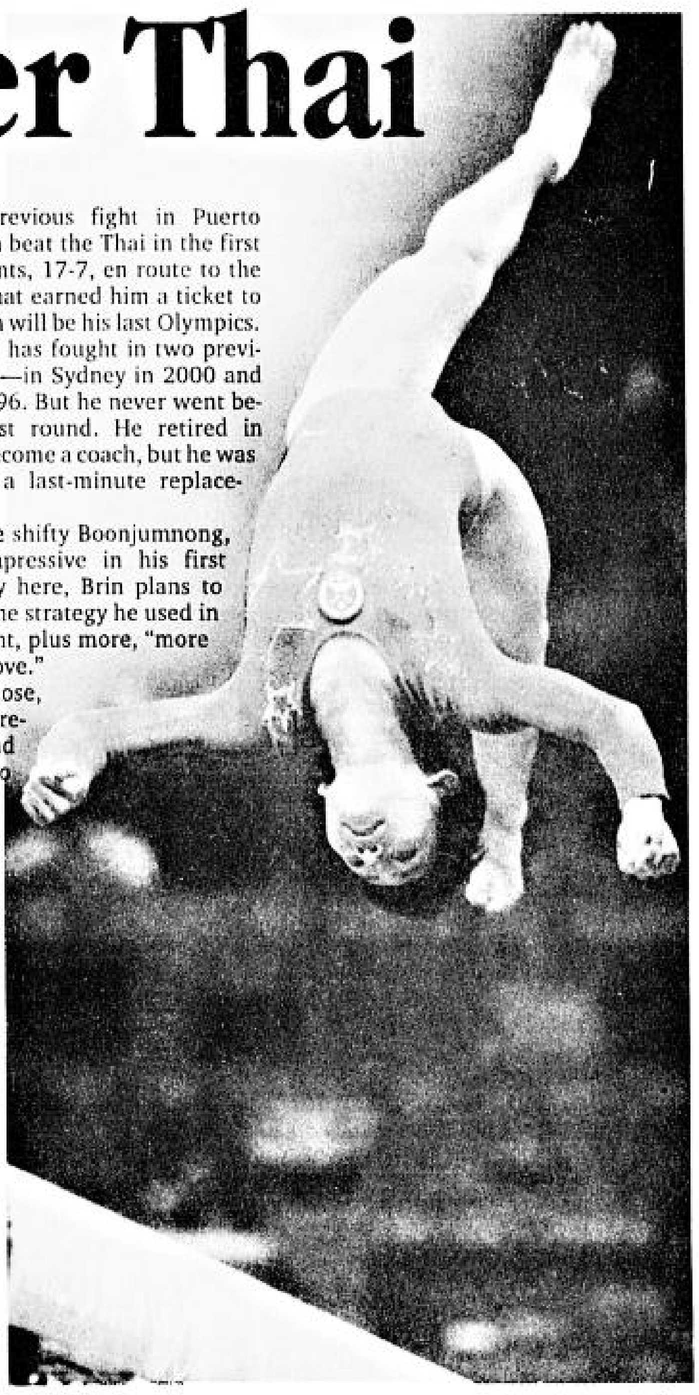
"I know I have a friend up there. I leave it up to Him," he said.

In their previous fight in Puerto Princesa, Brin beat the Thai in the first round on points, 17-7, en route to the gold medal that earned him a ticket to Athens, which will be his last Olympics.

At 31, Brin has fought in two previous Olympics—in Sydney in 2000 and Atlanta in 1996. But he never went beyond the first round. He retired in Palawan to become a coach, but he was called in as a last-minute replacement.

Against the shifty Boonjumnong, who was impressive in his first round victory here, Brin plans to adopt the same strategy he used in their first fight, plus more, "more help from above."

Win or lose, Brin plans to retire again and return to coaching.


CHINA'S Zhang Nan performs a routine on the balance beam during the artistic gymnastics women's team final. REUTERS

SPORTSWATCH

Havoline drivers eye key wins

COSETENG

MULTITITLED driver Jody Coseteng leads the charge of the powerhouse Havoline Racing Team when it guns for crucial victories in the 7th and 8th rounds of the Philippine National Touring Car Championships on Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit. Coseteng is within reach of the leaders in the premier N1 event of the BRC series with his aggregate of 45 points, behind the 52 of Rey Reyes and the 49 of Dominic Bon. The four-time Driver of the Year was at his best in the 5th and 6th rounds, which he ruled with ease, posting the fastest time of 1:50.796 in lap 2 with a total time of 47:18.046 in the final heat. "That was man and machine working in rhythm," said Coseteng, whose Honda Civic is finally fine-tuned to perfection.

Last call for enduro adventures

THE ENDURO San Mig Light Adventures, which flags off at noon on Friday at Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City, is sounding off its final call for those interested. Participants will undergo skill tests and equipment check from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. today at Power-up in Pasig to make sure that they have what it takes for the rigid workout that awaits them in the Manila leg. Eighty three-person teams in the elite and fun races will test their skills, strengths and stamina as they go through various challenges. Champion in the Elite Category will get P75,000 and other prizes. Call (632) 412-8660 or log on to www.sanmiglight.com.ph.

Sta. Elena off to hot start in Luzvimin

STA. Elena rode on Carina Ricamonte's 51 points to open up a 10-point spread over Manila Southwoods in the centerpiece Diamond division after yesterday's opening round of the 2004 WGAP-Luzvimin Golf Invitational tournament at the Cebu Country Club course. With Vinice Godio scoring a 45, Therese Dabao carding 42 and Rio Co adding a 41, Sta. Elena amassed 179 for the day against the 169 of Southwoods. Lily Chan (32) and Tami Leung (27) did not count for Sta. Elena. Scoring for Southwoods were national player Carmelette Villaroman with 49, Lora Roberto 46, Glenda Da Roza 40 and Claudette Garcia 34. Wack Wack, getting 47 points from Stephanie Yu, was running third after totaling 166.

Drilon Cup marks 137th anniversary

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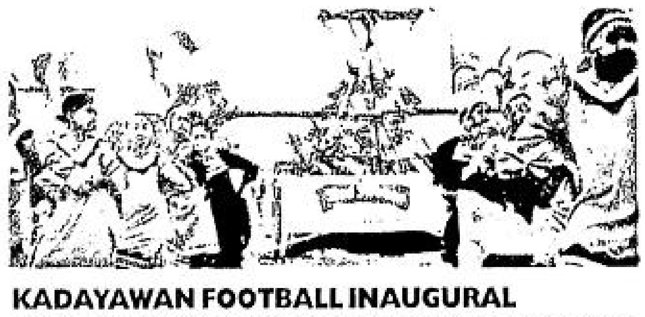
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Nestlé MILO
The Official Energy Drink of the Philippine Team to the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics

ATHENS SUMMER OLYMPICS MEDAL TALLY

Country	G	S	B	Total
China	10	6	2	18
United States	6	7	6	19
Australia	6	3	5	14
Japan	6	2	1	9
Ukraine	3	1	1	5
Russia	2	5	5	12
Italy	2	3	2	7
France	2	2	4	8
Greece	2	0	1	3
Romania	2	0	1	3
Turkey	2	0	1	3
Germany	1	2	1	4
Korea	1	1	2	4
Hungary	1	1	1	3
Thailand	1	0	2	3
South Africa	1	0	0	1
Switzerland	1	0	0	1
U Arab Emirates	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	0	2	3	5
DPR Korea	0	2	1	3
Austria	0	2	0	2
Poland	0	2	0	2
Great Britain	0	1	1	2
Slovakia	0	1	1	2
Zimbabwe	0	1	1	2
Georgia	0	1	0	1
India	0	1	0	1
Indonesia	0	1	0	1

AROUND ATHENS

Heaston accidentally writes history

AMERICAN shot putter Kristin Heaston accidently went into history as the first woman to compete in the ancient Olympic stadium, ending nearly 3,000 years of men-only competition here Wednesday. The honor should have gone to Singapore's Zhang Guirong, who was drawn to throw first in the first qualifying group of women's competition. However, while photographers massed around the Asian girl, officials of the second group in which Heaston was competing, told the Californian to go ahead and take her turn. Women were forbidden from participating in the ancient Games, on pain of death, although there are several stories of women competing disguised as men. *AFP*

US finally lands fencing top plum

FOR the first time in a century, the United States won a gold medal in Olympic fencing, and it added a bronze for good measure. Mariel Zagunis beat Tan Xue of China, 15-9, in the saber final, and American Sada Jacobson was third, beating Catalina Gheorghitoaia of Romania, 15-7. The United States had never won a medal in women's fencing. The last American medal in the sport was in Los Angeles in 1984, when Peter Westbrook won the bronze in men's saber. *AP*

Roddick advances; Federer ousted

THE WORLD'S top two tennis players found themselves struggling against low-ranked opponents in the second round of the Olympics—No. 1 Roger Federer flopped, and No. 2 Andy Roddick flourished. Federer was beaten, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, by 18-year-old Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic on Court 1. Roddick overcame 2000 silver medalist Tommy Haas of Germany, 6-4, 3-6, 9-7, before a raucous crowd at the main stadium. Venus Williams beat Maja Matevzic of Slovenia, 6-0, 6-0, earlier—the first shutout for a man or woman since tennis returned to the Olympics as a medal sport in 1988. *AP*

Ukrainian scores milestone

UKRAINIAN medley queen Yana Klochkova swam into Olympic history on Tuesday when she became the first woman to win the same two swimming events at successive Games. Klochkova added the 200 meters individual medley gold on Tuesday to the gold she had already won in the 400 medley, matching the feat she achieved in Sydney four years ago. She was watched by another Ukrainian national hero, former pole-vaulter and now International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Serhiy Bubka. Only Russian Alexander Popov and Hungarian Tamas Darnyi have matched Klochkova's feat in Olympic swimming. Popov won both the 50 and 100 freestyle golds in 1992 and 1996 and Darnyi completed 200 and 400 individual medley doubles in 1988 and 1992. *Reuters*

OLYMPIC CAGING

US struggles past Greece

ATHENS—Allen Iverson scored 17 points despite a broken thumb on his shooting hand as the United States rebounded from a shock opening game loss to beat Greece, 77-71, at the men's Olympic basketball tournament on Tuesday.

World champions Serbia and Montenegro also bounced back from a tough opening with Milos Vujanic hitting a pair of freethrows in the dying seconds to give his team a 74-72 win.

Spain once again showed why they are medal contenders, beating Argentina, 87-76, on the back of Pau Gasol's 26 points.

Humbled by a 92-73 loss to Puerto Rico on Sunday, the US team faced even more adversity when it was revealed before Tuesday's match that Iverson had a fractured bone in the right thumb.

On top of everything, the Americans faced a hostile Greek crowd that booed the US players every time they touched the ball and shook the rafters with each Greek score.

But Iverson backed up his reputation as a gritty player, leading the US when Tim Duncan got into foul trouble.

Still, outside shooting problems continued to plague the US with most of their points coming on rebounds and inside the paint.

"Believe it or not, I think we'll make an outside shot some day," said coach Larry Brown adding the team still has a long way to go despite playing better defensively against the Greeks.

The Greeks had a couple of chances to pull even with the US but could not find the mark when they needed to most, though, missing several open shots near the end.

"At some points in the game we really did think we could beat them," said Greek guard Theodorus Paploukas.

Serbia and Montenegro escaped with their first win of the tournament when Gianluca Basile watched his 12-footer bounce out off the rim as time ran out, spoiling Italy's eight-point comeback in the final two minutes.

Serbia and Montenegro needed a win after losing in the final seconds to Argentina on Sunday, and looked to be in control with a 13-point lead halfway through the third quarter. But a couple of turnovers let Italy back into the game.

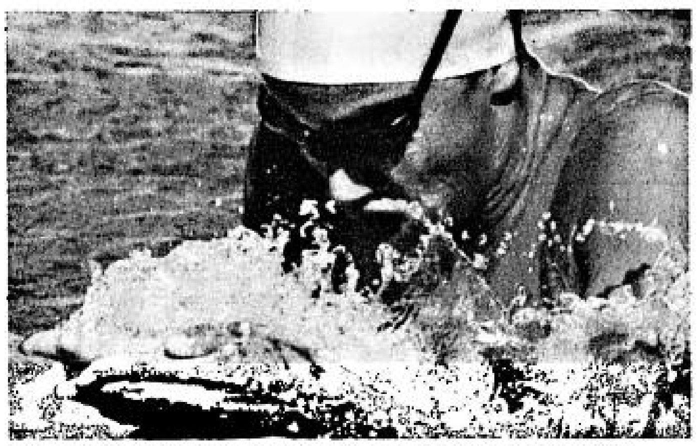
"It was a difficult game, exactly like the battle against Argentina two days ago," said Serbian coach Zelimir Obradovic.

In other preliminary round play on Tuesday, China beat New Zealand, 69-62, on the back of Yao Ming's 39-point performance and Australia beat Angola, 83-59.

Puerto Rico came back to earth, losing to Lithuania, 98-90, in their first game since handing the United States their first Olympic defeat since 1988. *Reuters*

REUTERS

LEBRON James of the US dunks above Greece defender Nikolaos Chatzivrettas.



FILIPINA Jaclyn Pangilinan swims in a qualifying heat of the 200 breaststroke in the Athens Olympics Wednesday. AP

Phelps adds two golds to his haul

ATHENS, Greece—Michael Phelps showed more emotion than he has the entire Olympics, punching his fists in the air and letting out a ferocious yell. With the quest to surpass Mark Spitz out of the way, Phelps could savor one of the greatest races in swimming history.

Phelps claimed his second and third gold medals of the Athens Games on Tuesday, winning the 200-m butterfly and coming back an hour later to lead off the United States' thrilling victory over Australia in the 800 freestyle relay.

The 19-year-old American started things right for the Americans in the relay, and teammate Klete Keller held off Ian Thorpe with a dramatic lunge for the wall that sent 10,000 fans into an uproar.

"This race will go down as one of the greatest in history," said Phelps, who helped the Americans avenge a loss to Australia four years ago in Sydney.

"Every guy came through." *AP*

Samsung Tour Davao leg kicks off

DAVAO—A showdown between Jay Bayron and Louie Dakudao looms as the race for the championship crown gets going today in the fourth elimination leg of the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Apo Golf Club course here.

Bayron is eyeing a return trip to next year's grand finals but faces tough opposition, especially from the talented Dakudao, who is hot on the comeback trail.

Dakudao was among those who anchored Del Monte's historic victory in the Philippine Airlines Interclub last March.

Only 16 entries will play in the 72-hole championship, including youngsters carrying familiar names of Davao's golf talents, Jhonell Ababa and Dante Bisera.

However, about 150 players have also signed up for the tourney, most of whom are seeing action in the 36-hole battle for various handicap classifications in the men and ladies divisions.

The Samsung Tour is backed by Tokyo Tokyo, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines, adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport and Rogin-E. Killer-Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

To be disputed are the top awards in the Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D level for men and the Class A, Class B and Class C for ladies.

For inquiries on the second leg, call 635-0010.

Boy Blue Ocampo of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group said that scoring well will require a lot of consistency because of the character of Apo, which is the only course in Mindanao that has hosted the Philippine Open.

Winners will receive trophies and appliances from Samsung. Appliances will also be raffled off during the awarding ceremonies on Sunday.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

GOLF: US Amateur Championship; 3 p.m. (r) and tomorrow at 1 a.m.; ESPN—Catch the second round live from New York.

World Golf Championships NEC Invitational; tomorrow at 3 a.m.; Sports Plus—The best professional players tee off.

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games- Sixers vs Celtics, Game 7, 1981 East Finals; 8 a.m.; Solar Sports—Relive the game between Dr.J's Sixers and Bird's Celtics.

NBA's Greatest Teams; 10 a.m. (r-7 p.m.); Solar Sports—Get to know more about the prominent past NBA franchises.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SMALL BEGINNINGS Adam Fasth knows where great things start from. The 2-year-old son of Swedish golfer Niclas Fasth putts on the practice green at Firestone Country Club, where the elder Fasth is scheduled to compete in the 2004 NEC Invitational. AP

Tamaraws clash with Falcons today

GAMES TODAY (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
11:30 a.m.—La Salle vs NU (Jrs)
1:30 p.m.—La Salle vs NU (Srs)
*4 p.m.—FEU vs Adamson (Srs)
*Live on Studio 23

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE DEFENDING champion Far Eastern Tamaraws aim to fortify their hold of second spot when they clash with the Adamson Falcons today in the UAAP varsity basketball tournament at the Cuneta Astrodome.

In the other senior match, the La Salle Archers try to improve their slate when they face the winless National University Bulldogs at 1:30 p.m.

Although coach Koy Banal expressed satisfaction with FEU's record, he noted that the Tams need to improve more.

"I reminded the team that last year, we were number one defensively. But now UE, UST and UP all went up. All the teams have peaked and we haven't. We have no excuse," he said.

The loss of veteran playmaker Ramil Tagupa, who was sidelined for the rest of the season due to a knee injury, has been a big blow for the Falcons.

STANDINGS	W	L
Ateneo	8	1
FEU	6	2
UE	5	4
Adamson	4	4
La Salle	4	4
UST	4	5
UP	3	6
NU	0	8

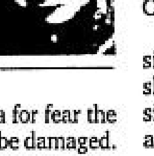
"There's a lot of pressure on our point guards right now, but we just have to step up. The team has to come together and help each other out," said coach Luigi Trillo.

La Salle, meanwhile, is coming off its worst performance of the season. The Archers are statistically the top offensive team, yet they finished with a dismal 29.3 percent shooting clip against FEU and took a 70-52 loss.

Although saddled with only their second back-to-back loss since coach Franz Pumaren took over in 1998, the Archers are expected to avoid a three-game slide against the Bulldogs.

Nude is good in Olympiad

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

WHO said playing nude in the Olympics was bad?

Not in the olden times.

In the ancient Olympiad, male and female competitors in the shot put had competed naked.

John Godina, an American thrower now in Athens, has told Agence France-Presse: "I'm thankful I live in an era when I have got to compete with clothes."

Godina was the bronze medalist in the 2000 Sydney Olympics and silver medalist in 1996 in Atlanta.

But what's he thankful for? That our Olympic spectators today are clothed that's why he needs to be covered, too?

It's not really what we are, it's what society tells us. It's never our call, it's the call of the present.

Even spectators in the ancient Olympiad were allowed to watch the Games nude.

Because the ancient Olympiad had called for shot put participants to play nude, that did not mean they were guilty of indecent exposure.

Dirt, as always, is in the mind.

Today, nudist camps found around the world habitually charge clothed intruders with indecency. You aren't naked, you have no business entering a nudist territory. You don't go to a royal wedding wearing slacks and jeans.

Anyway, the shot put—this sport requires a solid metal ball to be flung, and the one having the farthest throw wins the gold medal—opened athletics competitions on Wednesday in Olympia. The last time the shot put was held in Olympia was 1,619 years ago.

The decision to pick shot put over discus throw as the curtain raiser for athletics had something to do with the relics of storied Olympia in Greece. Organizers had originally announced that the discus throw was the athletics' "opener" but at the last minute, they scrapped the idea for fear the monuments of Olympia could be damaged. You know how much the Greeks value their heritage; they'll die for it so that all over Greece, you still see intricately crafted buildings, if not breathtaking ruins, made of pure marble that are normally 2,000 years old. Just watching them, you could almost hear the voice of an ancient Greek poet reciting the Iliad, or Demosthenes declaiming on the steps of Parthenon.

"I am extremely excited," said Godina's teammate, Reese Hoffa.

AFP's Phil Minshull wrote: "Hoffa was once the self-styled Unknown Shot Putter, competing in a WWF wrestling mask in order to bring attention to the low-level status of his event."

His stunt has ended in this year's Olympics.

"I'm going to keep it as serious as possible," said Hoffa before Wednesday's shot put events. "I've got respect for the site. I don't want to go up there and make a mockery of things."

Hoffa almost has a "birthright" to the Olympics in that he was born and raised in a town called Athens in Georgia, USA.

Now that you know that nudity wasn't taboo in the ancient Olympiad, it can be said that "streakers"—those spectators, either male or female, suddenly emerging from nowhere and running naked across football fields, golf fairways or at center court while the Wimbledon is on—could be merely reliving Olympic tradition. As such, the next time we encounter them, we should not be too harsh as to immediately throw them behind bars for vagrancy, indecent exposure, whatever. Instead, they should be treated with kid gloves.

They, sure, know how to pay homage to an Olympic heritage: Nudity in public isn't bad per se. It's just that it has outlived its usefulness.

Has it, really?

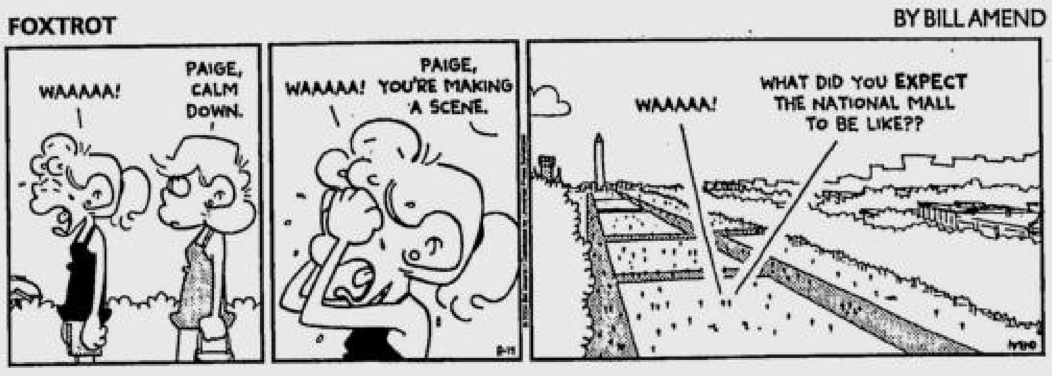
No, not different folks, different strokes.

This time, it's different times, different chimes.

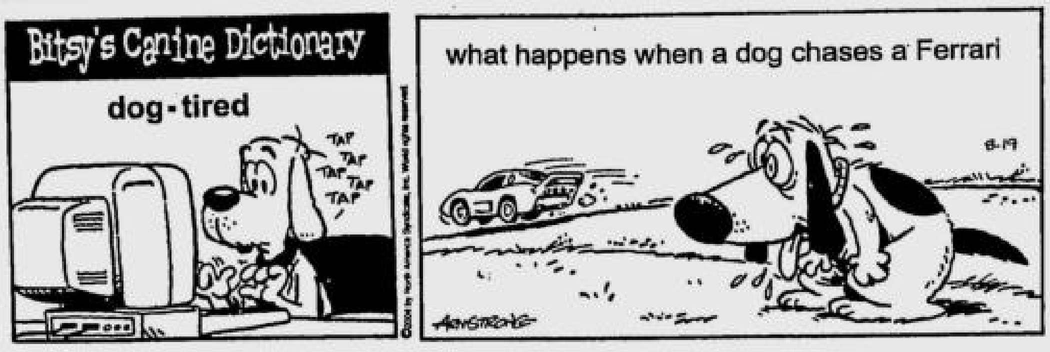
***

FASTBREAK. My condolences to Gerry Carpio, the Star's assistant sports editor, whose mother, Felicitas, died last week. I pray for the eternal repose of Gerry's mother and I wish Gerry would recover fast from his grief. It wouldn't be easy—I lost my own mother in 1996, and I know the feeling—but some beer with friends could help, Gerry.

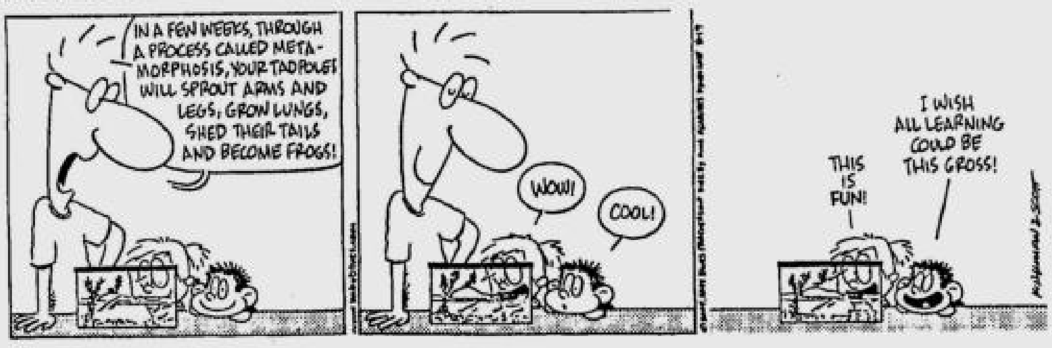
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


WAAAAA!
PAIGE, CALM DOWN.
WAAAAA!
PAIGE, YOU'RE MAKING A SCENE.
WAAAAA!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT THE NATIONAL MALL TO BE LIKE??

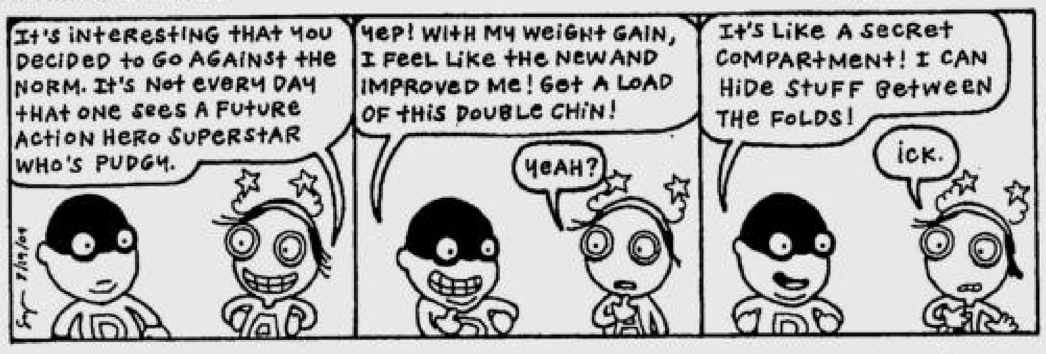
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


Bitsy's Canine Dictionary
dog-tired
TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
what happens when a dog chases a Ferrari
8-19
ARMSTRONG

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


IN A FEW WEEKS, THROUGH A PROCESS CALLED METAMORPHOSIS, YOUR TADPOLES WILL SPROUT ARMS AND LEGS, GROW LUNGS, SHED THEIR TAILS AND BECOME FROGS!
WOW!
COOL!
THIS IS FUN!
I WISH ALL LEARNING COULD BE THIS GROSS!

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


It's interesting that you decided to go against the norm. It's not every day that one sees a future action hero superstar who's pudgy.
Yep! With my weight gain, I feel like the new and improved me! Get a load of this double chin!
Yeah?
It's like a secret compartment! I can hide stuff between the folds!
ick.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're confident, and you're patient. Very often you are in a position of influence where you must reveal or conceal information. Others do not readily understand you; in fact, they make erroneous assumptions about you. You always explore all the opportunities of something before you move on. A bright, busy social year awaits you.
Birthdate of: Matthew Perry, actor; Bill Clinton, 42nd US president; Coco Chanel, fashion designer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel quite quarrelsome. By nature, your sign is a bit explosive and aggressive. But yesterday and today you're provoked by something! Try to calm down.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be patient with children. Your reflexive response is to tell them off today. But is this the wisest way to handle something? Children learn from what you do, not what you say.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel rebellious and independent at home today. You're ready to defend your turf about something. You've drawn a line in the sand.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is another accident-prone day. However, today's accidents are more likely verbal and more minor. Don't speak without thinking. Be aware of the feelings of others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Money deals, cash flow, purchases and even how you earn your money are all subject to reversal and change right now. Don't quit your job in a huff.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You need to put the brakes on your mind right now. Words and thoughts tumble hastily out of your mouth. Be careful what you say!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're too impatient to concentrate on detailed tasks. You're flying by the seat of your pants. You want the freedom to do whatever you want to do today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): In conversations with others, you're inclined to be blunt today. You say what you mean, and you mean what you say. But will this approach achieve your objective?

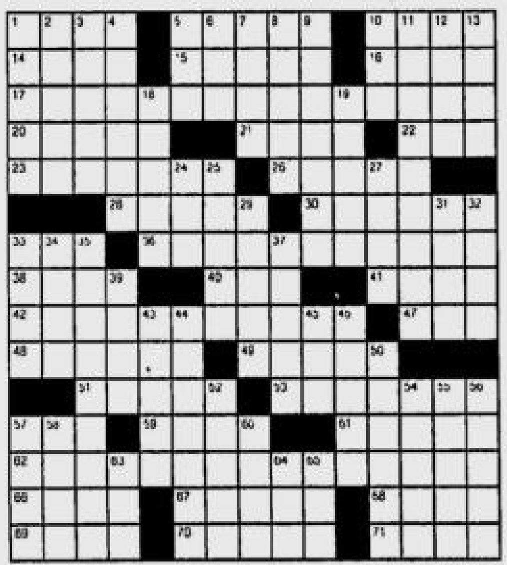
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to rant and rail against someone today. You feel an injustice has been done. Possibly, you're exasperated by the stupidity of someone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to win an argument today about religious, political or educational matters. You can't understand why others don't see things your way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You no longer want to be responsible for someone or something. You're ready to throw in the towel. (If so, throw in the soap and shampoo as well, so somebody else can use it.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Arguments with close friends and partners are likely at this time. That's why this isn't the best time to make important decisions. Best to wait until the dust settles.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

8/19/04

ACROSS

1 Turkish honorific
5 Pueblo block
10 Religious figure
14 Voting group
15 Winner's award
16 Judicial garb
17 Start of a quip
20 View twice
21 Indian deity
22 Acquire
23 Rock-boring tools
26 Get by begging
28 Poppycock
30 Jeweled coronets
33 Fig. of speech
36 Part 2 of quip
38 Yoko's family
40 Sci-fi Doctor
41 __-noire (bugbear)
42 Part 3 of quip
47 Kind of service or gloss
48 "Broken Arrow" co-star
49 Single-masted vessel
51 Horn-rims, e.g.
53 Strongly believe
57 Greek letter
59 Lamb choice
61 Expiate
62 End of quip
66 Crop of a bird
67 Bypass
68 Fireside yarn
69 Inn's landlord
70 Abominable snowmen
71 Aphrodite's son

DOWN

1 Cancel at NASA
2 Paste-up artist
3 Cigar or Swaps
4 Sign a receipt
5 Left Bank friend
6 2nd-smallest state
7 Bookie's calculations
8 Of atomic number 56
9 Raise
10 Stick in one's craw
11 Large snakelike fish
12 Hautboy
13 Small salamander
18 "Magic Man" rockers
19 Gymnast Comaneci
24 Fed. medical complex
25 Give birth to
27 Outfit
29 Cultural character
31 Against
32 Process part
33 Forage crop
34 Aware of
35 Greek dishes
37 "The Man Who __ Be King"
39 Cinch
43 Hellenic: pref.
44 In both directions
45 Portuguese colony in India
46 Romanian round dance
50 Height of fashion?
52 Italian white wine
54 Submarine detector
55 __-Saxon
56 Affirmatives
57 Incise deeply
58 Matador's opponent
60 Conspiracy
63 Large part of Can.
64 Half of CIV
65 NFL scores

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

P	A	S	T		S	L	A	M	S		S	A	S	H
L	I	L	A		C	O	R	O	T		U	L	N	A
O	M	A	R		O	W	E	T	O		S	L	I	M
W	E	D	O	N	T	K	N	O	W	W	H	A	T	
S	E	E	T	O		E	A	R		A	I	R		
				T	R	Y		O	A	F		O	A	T
O	N	S	I	D	E		W	I	T		T	U	L	A
W	E	K	N	O	W	T	I	L	W	E	K	N	O	W
L	A	I	N		E	O	N		A	N	O	D	E	S
S	T	P		E	D	D		S	R	A				
		A	B	A		I	A	N		C	O	I	L	S
	W	H	A	T	W	E	D	O	N	T	K	N	O	W
T	I	E	R		A	F	O	R	E		A	L	T	A
A	R	A	B		S	O	R	E	S		Y	E	T	I
R	E	D	S		P	R	E	S	S		S	T	E	N

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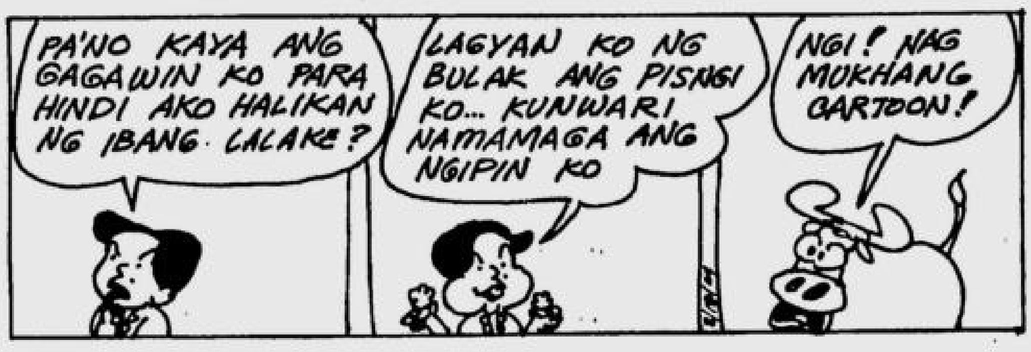
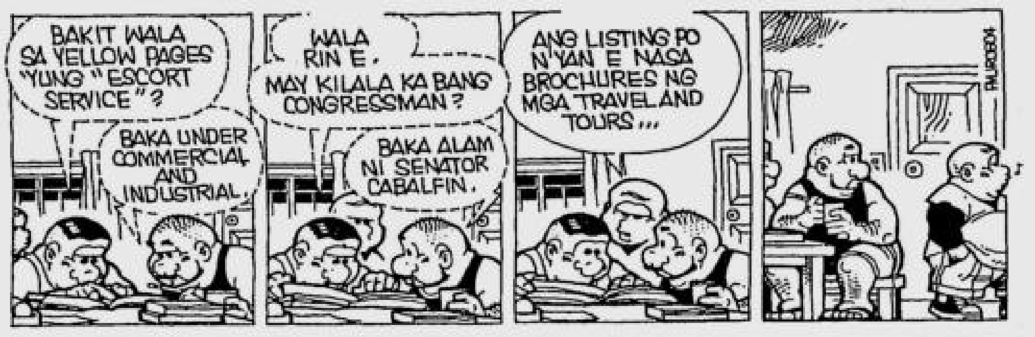
8/18/04

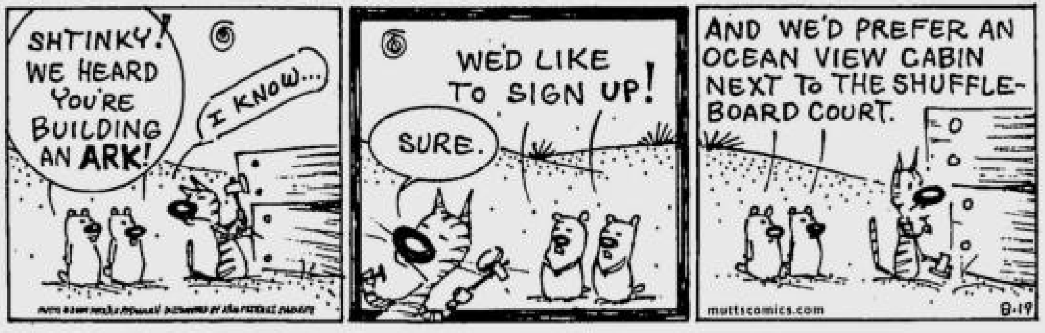
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PA'NO KAYA ANG GAGAWIN KO PARA HINDI AKO HALIKAN NG IBANG LALAKE?
LAGYAN KO NG BULAK ANG PISNGI KO... KUNWARI NAMAMAGA ANG NGIPIN KO
NGI! NAG MUKHANG CARTOON!

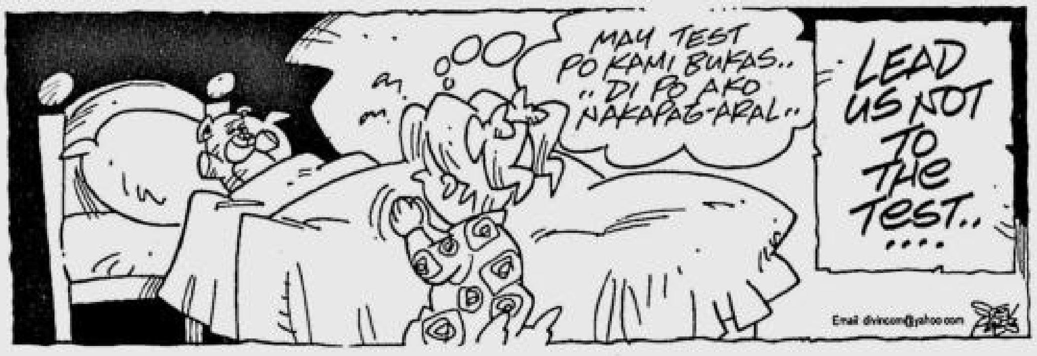
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT WALA SA YELLOW PAGES "YUNG "ESCORT SERVICE"?
BAKA UNDER COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL.
WALA RIN E.
MAY KILALA KA BANG CONGRESSMAN?
BAKA ALAM NI SENATOR CABALFIN.
ANG LISTING PO N'YAN E NASA BROCHURES NG MGA TRAVEL AND TOURS...
PMJR2004

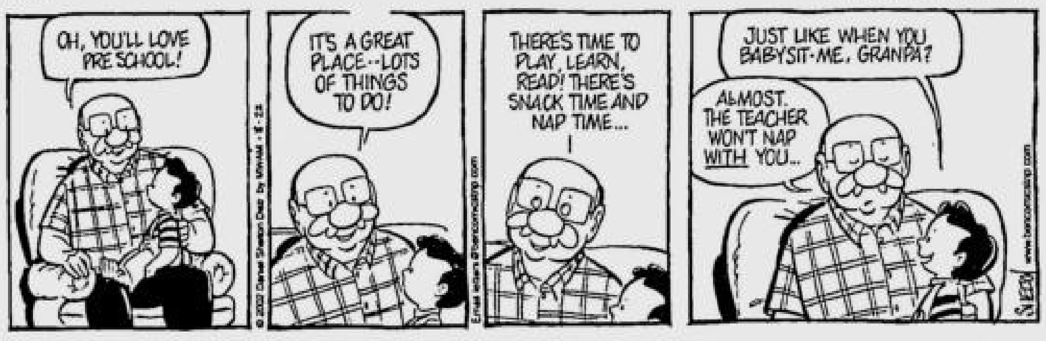
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SHTINKY! WE HEARD YOU'RE BUILDING AN ARK!
I KNOW...
WE'D LIKE TO SIGN UP!
SURE.
AND WE'D PREFER AN OCEAN VIEW CABIN NEXT TO THE SHUFFLE-BOARD COURT.
muttscomics.com
8-19

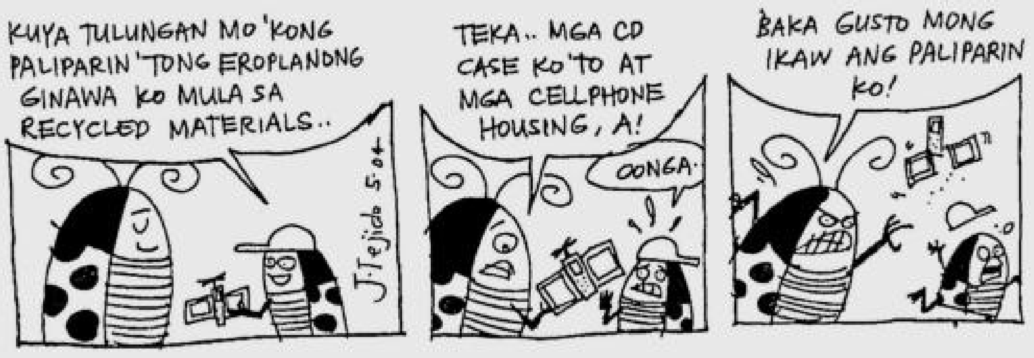
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MAY TEST PO KAMI BUKAS.. ..DI PO AKO NAKAPAG-ARAL..
LEAD US NOT TO THE TEST.. ....
Email divincom@yahoo.com

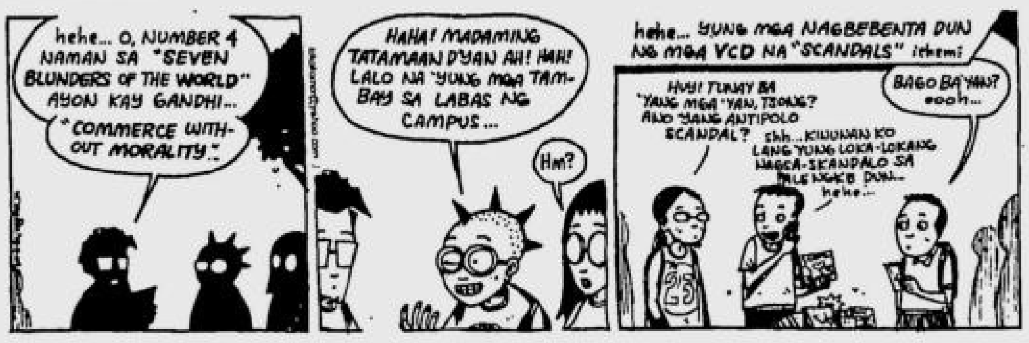
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH, YOU'LL LOVE PRE SCHOOL!
IT'S A GREAT PLACE--LOTS OF THINGS TO DO!
THERE'S TIME TO PLAY, LEARN, READ! THERE'S SNACK TIME AND NAP TIME...
JUST LIKE WHEN YOU BABYSIT ME, GRANPA?
ALMOST. THE TEACHER WON'T NAP WITH YOU..

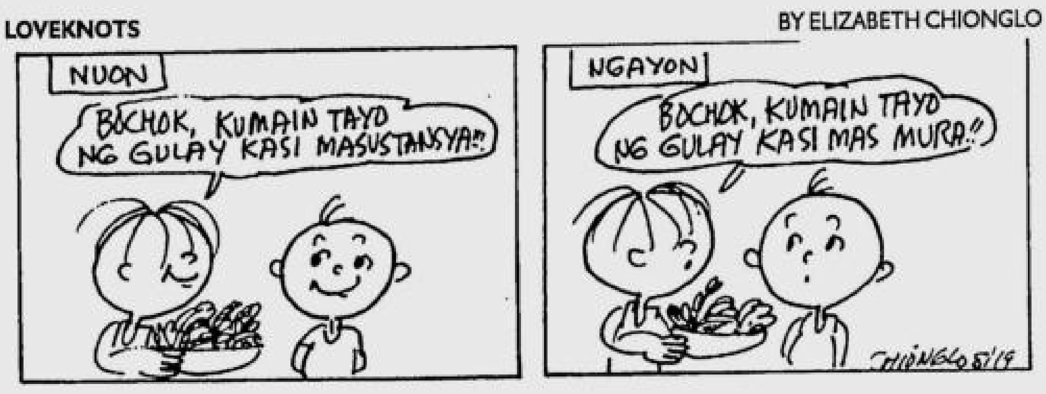
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA TULUNGAN MO 'KONG PALIPARIN 'TONG EROPLANONG GINAWA KO MULA SA RECYCLED MATERIALS..
J. Tejido 5.04
TEKA.. MGA CD CASE KO 'TO AT MGA CELLPHONE HOUSING, A!
OONGA.
BAKA GUSTO MONG IKAW ANG PALIPARIN KO!

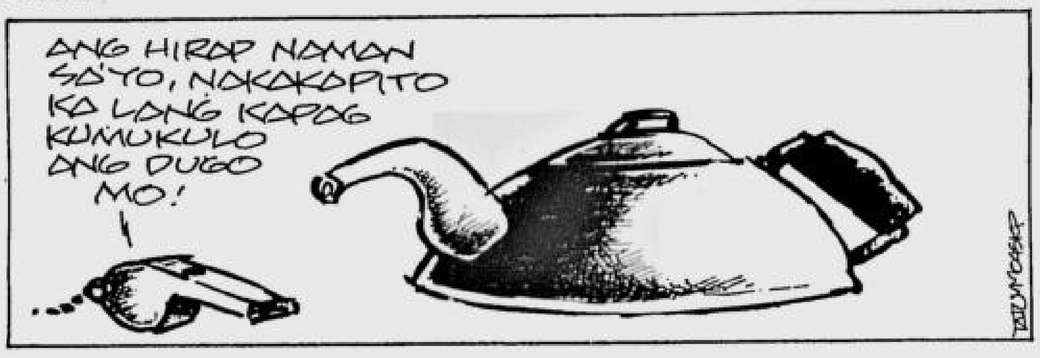
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... O, NUMBER 4 NAMAN SA "SEVEN BLUNDERS OF THE WORLD" AYON KAY GANDHI... "COMMERCE WITHOUT MORALITY."
HAHA! MADAMING TATAMAAN D'YAN AH! HAH! LALO NA 'YUNG MGA TAMBAY SA LABAS NG CAMPUS...
Hm?
hehe... YUNG MGA NAGBEBENTA DUN NG MGA VCD NA "SCANDALS" ihem!
HUY! TUNAY BA 'YUNG MGA 'YAN, TSONG? ANO 'YANG ANTIPOLO SCANDAL?
shh... KINUNAN KO LANG 'YUNG LOKA-LOKANG NAGKA-SKANDALO SA PALENGKE DUN... hehe...
BAGO BA 'YAN? oooh...

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NUON
BOCHOK, KUMAIN TAYO NG GULAY KASI MASUSTANSYA!!
NGAYON
BOCHOK, KUMAIN TAYO NG GULAY KASI MAS MURA!!
CHIONGLO 8/19

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG HIRAP NAMAN SA'YO, NAKAKAPITO KA LANG KAPAG KUMUKULO ANG DUGO MO!

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

Dennis vs fellow actor

IS IT true that **Dennis Trillo** had a difficult time getting into the cast of GMA 7's "Mulawin" because some drumbeaters of another actor who's also in the new series were trying to stop his entry for unknown reasons? Dennis' persistence paid off so he landed the job anyway. I wonder if a clash will erupt between Dennis and the other actor.

JC's Calendar

I ASKED **JC Castro** pointblank if he was really an "escort boy" before. I was floored when he answered "Yes—in santacruzans!" Then I cornered him some more regarding his ex-fiancee **Melissa Mendez.** He ignored my question and flatly said, "Let's talk about the Calendar Boys. I am their leader and we have a glossy artistic calendar coming out soon."

Defending Baroy

IN MY own experience, a boyfriend who's not in show biz serves as my link to reality for he keeps me grounded. The disadvantage is that he's more prone to jealousy attacks because he can't relate to the demands of my work. It becomes even more difficult when parents come into the picture.

Take the case of **Mickey Ferriols** and her boyfriend **Baroy.** My Ateneo buddy comes to the defense of Baroy. "The write-ups about Baroy are so unfair," he says. "I watched the interview of Mickey Ferriol's mom on 'The Buzz.' I guess she has forgotten that when Baroy met Mickey, she had no job. Why are they claiming that Mickey is Baroy's sugar mommy? It was Baroy who took care of Mickey and spent for her when she was jobless."

Another Atenista added, "How dare they say he's a bad influence on Mickey. How can an Ateneo varsity basketball player be a bad influence on a celebrity? No matter how much Baroy is earning in ABS-CBN as research department head, it's not his bread and butter. He has money from his maternal

DENNIS/ A22

TRILLO
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

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NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA 632-9115 to 16
CINEMA 1
THX : ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
2 THE VILLAGE 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
3 BANGKOK HAUNTED 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
4 JANDARA 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
6 THE STEPFORD WIVES 10:35, 12.50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9.50
7 CATWOMAN 12:40, 3.00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU 10.35, 12.50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
9 COLLATERAL 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
10 A CINDERELLA STORY 12:25, 2:20, 4:15, 6 10, 8:05, 10:00
MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P150 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10:10, 12:35, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:00
2 JANDARA 10:40, 12:55, 3.10, 5.25, 7:40, 9:50
3 THE VILLAGE 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5.30, 7 40, 9:50
4 THE STEPFORD WIVES 11.00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9.50
6 BANGKOK HAUNTED 11.10, 1.30, 3:50, 6:10, 8.20, 10:00
7 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12 00, 2:25, 4.50, 7:15, 9:30

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280
1 COLLATERAL 10:45, 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 9:00
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30
3 THE VILLAGE 12:15, 2:50, 5:25, 8:00, 10:30
4 BANGKOK HAUNTED 11:10, 1:40, 4.10, 6:40, 9.10
5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10.10, 12:45, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30
6 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU 10.10, 12:40, 3.10, 5.40, 8.10, 10:30
7 A CINDERELLA STORY 10.50, 12.50, 2:50, 4.50, 6 50, 9.00
8 THE STEPFORD WIVES 10 50, 12 50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:30

NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 8:00
2 GARFIELD 10:30, 12:10, 1:50, 3:30, 5:10, 6:50, 8:30
3 A CINDERELLA STORY 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8.30
4 COLLATERAL 11:00, 1.25, 3:50, 6:15, 8 40
5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12:40, 3:15, 5.50, 8.30
6 THE VILLAGE 10:20, 12:25, 2:30 4:35, 6:40, 8:45
7 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU 10:15, 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:30
8 CATWOMAN 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575
1 THE VILLAGE
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 KARELASYON

CAINTA 240-4661
1 THE VILLAGE
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 A CINDERELLA STORY
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

STA. ROSA (049)837-0907
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 A CINDERELLA STORY
3 ELLA ENCHANTED
4 THE VILLAGE
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 COLLATERAL
3 ELLA ENCHANTED
4 PERLAS
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

DASMARIÑAS 852-2125 / 416-4332
1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 KARELASYON
3 THE VILLAGE
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
5 ELLA ENCHANTED

STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 KARELASYON
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
5 THE VILLAGE
6 COLLATERAL

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
3 DEAD PEOPLE
4 THE VILLAGE
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
6 SYLVIA

BACOLOD 441-0458/59
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 BEAUTIFUL LIFE
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
5 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
6 KAINAN SA HIGHWAY

ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
4 THE PRINCE AND ME
5 DEAD PEOPLE
6 ELLA ENCHANTED

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AT THE CENTER

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
NOKIA EVENT August 20 to 22, 2004	HELLO KITTY 30TH BIRTHDAY PARTY August 20 to 22, 2004	IMPERIAL CIRCUS LIVE! August 20 to 22, 2004

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stage
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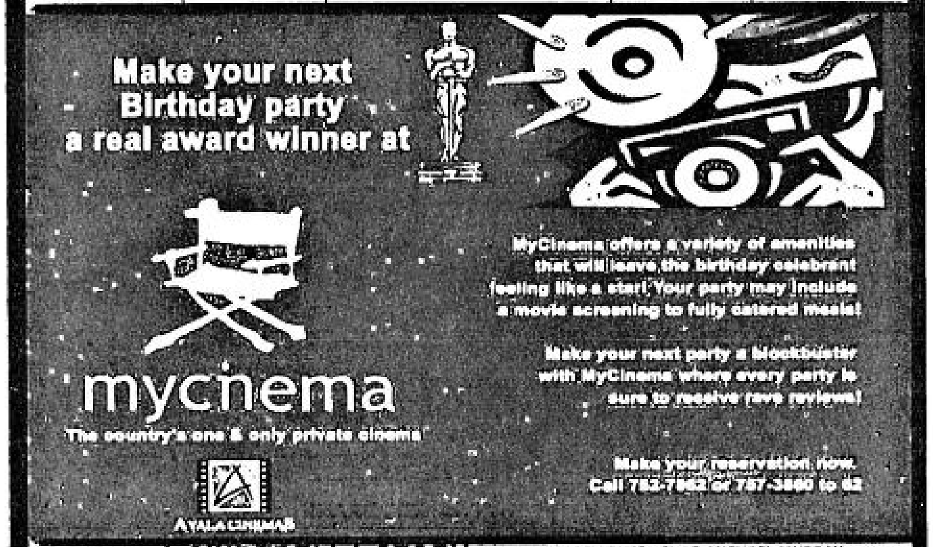
AYALA CINEMAS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
THX 1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR	1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR	1 A CINDERELLA STORY	5 GARFIELD	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 THE STEPFORD WIVES 12 25, 2 35, 4 45, 6 55, 9 05, 11 15	1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 THE STEPFORD WIVES	2 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2: THE UNBORN	2 THE VILLAGE	6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12 30, 2 40, 4 50, 7 00, 9 10, 11 20	2 DIRTY DANCING 2
3 THE VILLAGE	3 THE STEPFORD WIVES	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE STEPFORD WIVES 11 40, 1 50, 4 00, 6.10, 8 20, 10 30	7 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 COLLATERAL 2.00, 4 30, 7.00, 9 30	3 THE UNINVITED
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU	4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU	4 COLLATERAL		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 A CINDERELLA STORY 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30, 11 30	4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 A CINDERELLA STORY				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE VILLAGE 2 40, 4 45, 6 50, 8 55, 11 00	5 PRINCE & ME

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 THE STEPFORD WIVES 10 55, 1 05, 3 15, 5 25, 7 35, 9 45
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 11 15, 1 10, 3 20, 5 30, 7 40, 9 50



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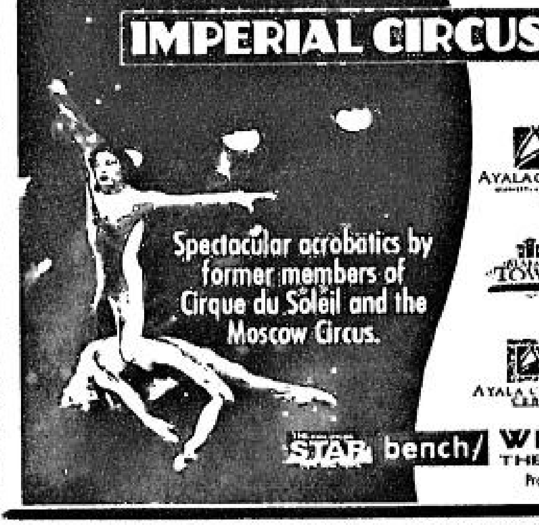

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August 13-15, 2004
11AM, 3PM, 6PM
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline: 842-2782 / 772-1860

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August 20, 11AM, 4PM, 7PM
August 21, 11AM, 3PM, 6PM
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movietime

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1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 COLLATERAL
3 CATWOMAN
4 THE VILLAGE
5 STEPFORD'S WIVES
6 GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL
7 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
8 GARFIELD
9 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
10 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
11 CINDERELLA STORY
12 DEAD PEOPLE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 CINDERELLA STORY
2 CATWOMAN
3 I, ROBOT
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
5 COLLATERAL
6 THE VILLAGE
7 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
8 GARFIELD
9 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
10 ELLA ENCHANTED
11 DEAD PEOPLE
12 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 THE VILLAGE
2 STEPFORD'S WIVES
3 COLLATERAL
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
5 GARFIELD
6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
7 CATWOMAN
8 ELLA ENCHANTED
9 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
10 DEAD PEOPLE
11 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
12 CINDERELLA STORY

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295432

1 COLLATERAL
2 THE CINDERELLA STORY
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
5 STEPFORD'S WIVES
6 THE ALAMO
7 THE VILLAGE
8 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 COLLATERAL
3 THE VILLAGE
4 CINDERELLA STORY
5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
6 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
7 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
8 GARFIELD
9 STEPFORD'S WIVES
10 DEAD PEOPLE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 COLLATERAL
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 COLLATERAL
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 THE VILLAGE
4 THE CINDERELLA STORY

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
3 THE VILLAGE
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA KNIGHTS
6 COLLATERAL

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2 THE VILLAGE
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066888

1 THE ALAMO
2 CINDERELLA STORY
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 STEPFORD'S WIVES
5 GARFIELD
6 CATWOMAN
7 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
8 COLLATERAL
9 THE VILLAGE
10 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763655

1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
4 THE VILLAGE

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 THE VILLAGE

SM CITY DASMA
(046) 4323201-04

1 ELLA ENCHANTED
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 THE VILLAGE
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173858

1 DEAD PEOPLE
2 COLLATERAL
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 THE VILLAGE
5 CATWOMAN
6 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
7 CINDERELLA STORY
8 GARFIELD

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108977-80

1 COLLATERAL
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 WHOLE 10 YARDS
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
(032) 2313876

1 IMELDA
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
3 PRINCE & ME
4 DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA KNIGHTS
5 COLLATERAL
6 THE UNINVITED
7 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
8 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 DEAD PEOPLE
2 RESERVED
3 ELLA ENCHANTED
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 PRINCE & ME
6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
7 RESERVED
8 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976998

1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 COLLATERAL
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 PRINCE & ME
5 ALONG CAME POLLY
6 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8593884

1 COLLATERAL
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA KNIGHTS
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

—THE— PODIUM CINEMA

1
ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
11:15 FS/ 11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/ 8:45/10:25 LFS/ 11:00 LMF/12:40 END

2
STEPFORD'S WIVES
11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/ 8:50/10:25 LFS/ 11:00 LMF/12:35 END

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ASIA'S EROTIC PHENOMENON
A Nonzee Nimibutr Film
Jandara
A STORY OF SEX, GUILT AND RETRIBUTION

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proudly brings you
the exclusive screening of
ASIA'S EROTIC PHENOMENON

Jandara

at Robinsons Movieworld
Galleria and Ermita

CAST:
Viapavee Charoenpua, Christy Chung, Suwinit Panjamawat.

SYNOPSIS:
Jan Dara is a film set in the moody and turbulent Thailand of the 1930s. Jan Dara is the name of a Thai young man whose earliest memories recall his own father having sex with his childhood nanny. In this lopsided and obsessive world, At the tender age of thirteen, he was cast out of his comfortable but troubled household after his stepsister accused him of rape. Years later Jan Dara returns home to seek revenge on his father by outdoing his father's sexual conquests and making him be witness to his triumphs.

MTRCB Rating: R18

For SCREENING SCHEDULES, call 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld com

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MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangrila Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171

1 (DOLBY) ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
PG - 13 / FS : 12:50 pm, 3:05 pm, 5:20 pm, 7:35 pm LMF : 9:50 pm

2 (DOLBY) THE STEPFORD WIVES
PG - 13 / FS : 11:25 am, 1:40 pm, 3:55 pm, 6:10 pm 8:25 pm, LMF : 10:40 pm

3 (DOLBY) A CINDERELLA STORY
GP / FS : 11:30 am, 1:30 pm, 3:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm, LMF : 9:30 pm

4 (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE
PG-13 /FS : 1:00 pm, 3:35 pm, 6:10 pm, LMF : 8:45 pm

PREMIERE

(DOLBY) THE STEPFORD WIVES
PG - 13 / FS : 12:00 pm, 2:15 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:45 pm, LMF : 9:00 pm

isetann SUPER CINERAMA
CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO
tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY) RESERVE
2. ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
3. KARELASYON
4. NOW THAT I HAVE YOU -
5. BANGKOK HAUNTED

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 RESERVED
2 DEAD PEOPLE
3 KARELASYON
4 (SDDS) THE VILLAGE
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
6 (DOLBY) ALIEN VS, PREDATO
7 (DTS) ALIEN VS, PREDATO
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 ALIEN VS, PREDATO
3 THE CINDERELLA STORY

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 BANGKOK HAUNTED
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
5 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 BANGKOK HAUNTED
2 KARELASYON
3 COLLATERAL
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 (DOLBY) ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
6 THE VILLAGE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1 (DOLBY) ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
2 (SDDS) ELLA ENCHANTED
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL
4 (GOLD DTS) THE STEPFORD WIVES
5 (GOLD) (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE
6 (GOLD) (SDDS) THE CINDERELLA STORY
7 (GOLD) (DOLBY) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
8 [illegible] NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
9 [illegible] BANGKOK HAUNTED
10 [illegible] GARFIELD

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center

ALI MALL CINEPLEX
Tel 911-3101 loc. 8242 / 8281 / 8397

3 (Dolby) NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 (SDDS) ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
5 (DTS) THE VILLAGE
6 (Dolby) BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
7 (Dolby) STEFORD WIVES

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 ALYAS BOMBA QUEEN
4 RESERVED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DTS EX) CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 THE VILLAGE
3 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL
4 (DTS) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 AROUND THE WORLD
3 (DOLBY) GARFIELD
4 (DTS) ELLA ENCHANTED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 CATWOMAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE
2 (DOLBY) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
3 (DOLBY) THE STEPFORD WIVES
4 (DOLBY) THE CINDERELLA STORY

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 KARELASYON
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 (DTS) ALIENT VS, PREDATOR

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 (DTS) THE CINDERELLA STORY
3 (DOLBY) ALIENT VS, PREDATOR
4 THE VILLAGE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 (DOLBY) THE CINDERELLA STORY
3 (DTS) ALIENT VS, PREDATOR
4 THE VILLAGE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 GARFIELD
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
3 (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE
4 (DTS) GARFIELD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3327

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 THE CINDERELLA STORY
3 (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) I - ROBOT
2 KARELASYON
3 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
4 (DTS) CATWOMAN

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) THE VILLAGE
2 KARELASYON
3 (DTS) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 THE CINDERELLA STORY

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 COLLATERAL
3 (DTS) ELLA ENCHANTED
4 (DOLBY) ALIENT VS. PREDATOR

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
2 COLLATERAL
3 PERLAS
4 ALIENT VS. PREDATOR

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 ALIENT VS. PREDATOR
2 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

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FERRIOLS
RUDY ESPERAS

Dennis Trillo...

From page A21

grandparents that's in the millions. He comes from a good family and a good school."

Perhaps Mickey's mom is not fully aware of how deep her daughter's involvement with Baroy is. It's quite futile to meddle in the love affair of our children, or any couple for that matter. Only the two parties involved know for sure what goes on when nobody's watching them.

Youth training

BUSINESSWORKS Inc., the Department of Education Center for Students and Co-Curricular Affairs, Ateneo Strains and the Bureau of Secondary Education are currently holding the biggest gathering of leadership experts in the 2nd National Youth Leadership Training Seminar (NLTS), Aug. 16-21, 2004 at the Teachers Camp in Baguio City.

The event is attended by more than 2,000 HS students, student government officers, principals and advisers from both public and private schools across the country.

The week-long learning event focuses on transformational leadership. It features workshops, sessions, team building activities and entertainment nights, with high-impact speakers, performers and guests.

The guests include Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, Anthony Pangilinan, Ardy Abello, Rep. Eulogio Magsaysay, NYC Commissioners Araceli Aves, Marc Fabian Castrodes and Christopher Arnuco Jr., Emmanuel Cabusao, Undersecretary Jose Martin Gascon, Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo;

Dingdong Dantes, Francis Kong, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Jim Paredes, Carelle Mangaliag;

Sen. Francis N. Pangilinan, Chot Reyes, Sev Sarmenta, Dr. Lolita Andrada and Undersecretary Ramon Bacani.

'Fashion Sense'

ESTREMO Productions, together with Jack Daniels, launched "Fashion Sense" at V Bar last June. Catch them again this August every Monday at Bora Bar and every Friday at Halo. Watch as men and women with fashion sense model Freeway clothes and Cardams shoes to the music of DJs Slim and Travis.

Come in your best and be spotted as Fashionista of the Night.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Text Feedback: inquirer ent name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
Editor Louie C. Camino

Toti Fuentes a sterling example

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

OUR work schedule is particularly busy these days, with new productions and other involvements taking up so much of our time. But we've made it a point to adjust our appointments tonight, so we can be free to watch this week's episode on Channel 2's "Maalaala Mo Kaya?"

What's so special about tonight's episode of "MMK"? The inspiring anthology drama focuses on the particularly daunting challenges that acclaimed musician **Toti Fuentes** has faced.

Among other crises, Toti is very ill with a rare form of stomach cancer. But, the inspiring thing is, Toti hasn't let all of these hard blows get him down.

His faith, will to live and desire to help others remain firm and in top fighting form, and viewers should learn a lot from his sterling example.

We admire Toti for his courage, selflessness and humility. He's such an achiever in the music field that people wouldn't fault him for getting swellheaded—but he's remained as self-effacing as ever.

This, despite working with the best musical talents, both locally (Basil Valdez, the APO, Pilita Corrales) and internationally (Natalie Cole, Sergio Mendes, Andy Williams, Kevyn Lettau).

In addition, Toti has many charitable involvements, including doing fund-raising shows for a number of organizations, supporting the World of Hope Foundation, and spearheading the Hope for the World Children's Center, a foundation for destitute children.

Let's all watch the episode on him on "Maalaala Mo Kaya" tonight.

Let's pay tribute to a brave, admirable man, and learn from his "earned" insights about life.

Elvis forever

FIFTY years ago, Elvis Presley, then 19-year-old, recorded his first single, "That's All Right," and began a stellar singing and acting career that raged on until his death in 1977 at only 42.

Merk's Bar Bistro—on the third level of Greenbelt 3 in Makati City—marks the 50th anniversary of Presley's career with a special night titled "Echoes of Elvis" on Thursday, Aug. 26.

Participating are Elvis impersonators who've won contests commemorating the King of Rock—Alfred "Boy" Sanchez, winner of the 2002 "Be Elvis" tilt; Alex Torres, who topped the "Look and Sing Like Elvis" competition, and Homer Mendoza, an Elvis fan who sings like his idol as a hobby. Call 757-4020.

MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	MASARAP NA PUGAD / TUKAAN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
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CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	GARFIELD
CINEMA-2	INDECENT BEHAVIOR
CINEMA-3	CINDERELLA STORY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DEAD PEOPLE
CINEMA-6	I ROBOT
CINEMA-7	CATWOWAN
CINEMA-8	KARELASYON
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	VILLAGE
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STEFORD WIVES
CINEMA-12	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
CINEMA-14	COLLATERAL
CINEMA-15	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
CINEMA-1	ELLA ENCHANTED
CINEMA-2	COLLATERAL
CINEMA-4	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
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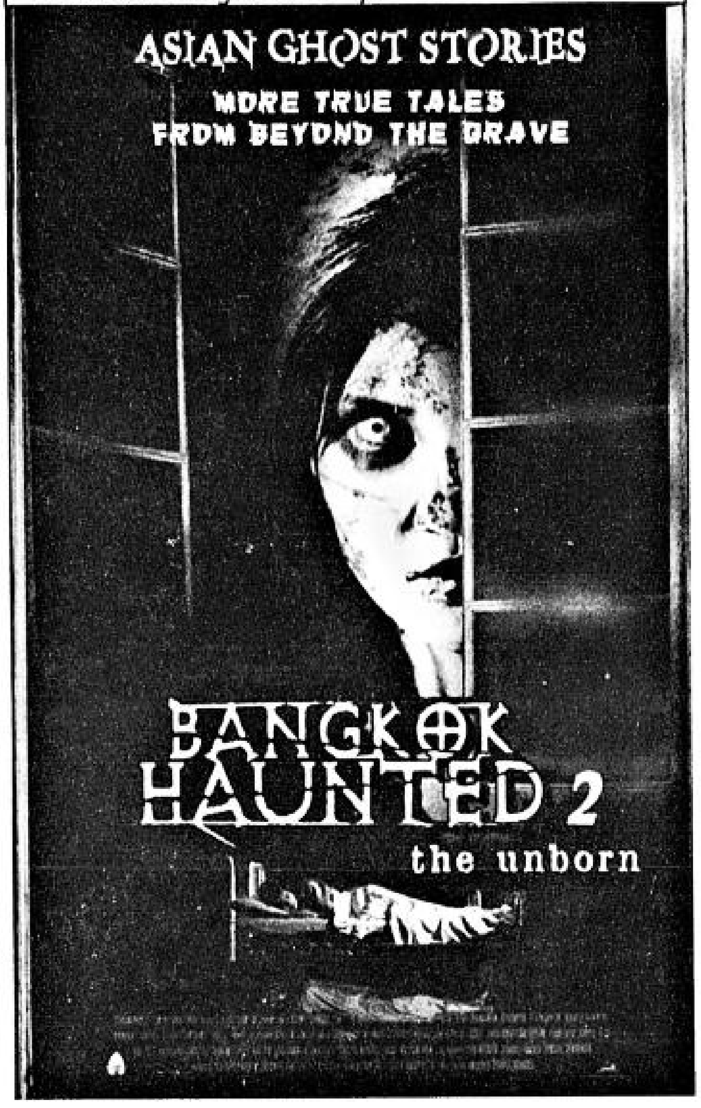

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ALIEN VS. PREDATOR PG13 12:40,3:05,5:30,7:55,10:20
THE VILLAGE PG13 12:20,2:45,5:10,7:35,10:00
NOW THAT I HAVE YOU GP 12:00,2:25,4:50,7:15,9:40
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4 SDDS ALIEN vs PREDATOR 12:10 pm 2:25 pm 4:40 pm 6:55 pm 9:10 pm
5 dts THE VILLAGE 12:10 pm 2:25 pm 4:40 pm 6:55 pm 9:10 pm
6 Dolby BANGKOK HAUNTED 2 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
7 Dolby STEPFORD WIVES 11:00 am 1:00 pm 3:00 pm 5:00 pm 7:00 pm 9:00 pm
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Monsour del Rosario	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega	Monsour del Rosario	Japoy Lizardo (12:30 PM-2:00 PM)
SM Fairview		**SM Manila**		**Landmark**	
Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Lydia de Vega	Japoy Lizardo	Japoy Lizardo	Japoy Lizardo (3:30 PM-5:00 PM)

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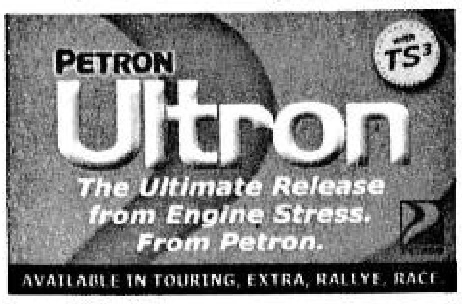
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DOF seeks powers to prosecute grafters

By Michelle V. Remo and Michael Lim Ubac

ALARMED over how corruption was worsening the government's precarious financial condition, the Department of Finance is drafting a bill that will give it more power to crack down on erring officials of revenue-generating agencies.

The bill, which the DOF expects to present to Congress by mid-September, will seek to institutionalize and strengthen the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) of the DOF through the granting of additional powers. RIPS is a unit of the DOF that conducts lifestyle checks among officials of the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs who are perceived to be engaged in corrupt practices.

According to Finance Undersecretary Noel Bonoan, one of the highlights of the bill would be the exemption of RIPS from the Bank Secrecy law. This means that should the bill be passed, RIPS will be allowed to check on bank records of any BIR or BOC official even without an approval from the courts.

He said the Bank Secrecy Law was hampering RIPS' investigation of corruption cases because of the tedious process involved in getting a court approval for it to look into one's bank records. Knowing an individual's bank records is a significant factor in pinning down corrupt officials, he said.

Another provision that the bill could contain is on allowing the Ombudsman to confiscate an asset of any BIR or BOC official who will not be able to explain how the asset was obtained.

Bonoan explained that the bill would require close coordination between RIPS and the Office of the Ombudsman. While RIPS will focus on doing the investigative work, the Office of the Ombudsman will be authorized to confiscate unexplained wealth.

The bill will also require additional staff and funding for RIPS, Bonoan added.

RIPS was created through EO 259 in December last year.

"The DOF has seen corruption as a main problem of revenue generation. There is a public perception that people do not have to pay proper taxes because the money just goes to the pockets of government officials. We want to get rid of that (perception)," Bonoan said.

In the Senate, administration Sen. Mar Roxas yesterday filed a bill allowing the anti-graft body to automatically get at least 10 percent of the value of the assets seized from grafters.

In an interview, Roxas said it was incumbent upon lawmakers to empower the Office of the Ombudsman to get a portion of the forfeited assets to give teeth to the agency, which "is severely understaffed and inadequately funded.".

He said he also believed that such a move would serve as an incentive to Ombudsman prosecutors.

"My proposal is that we can have an amendment to the forfeiture law so that a portion of that, because it is ill-gotten, is left to the agency that discovered and successfully prosecuted the graft cases," said Roxas, who stressed the

DOF/B3

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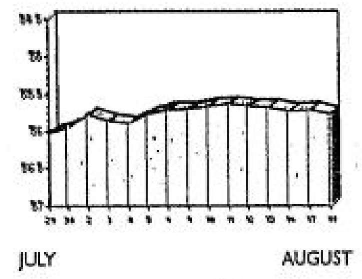


P 55.78 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 18, 2004

¥ 109.92 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 18, 2004

GOLD: $392.90-393.40

per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 13, 2004

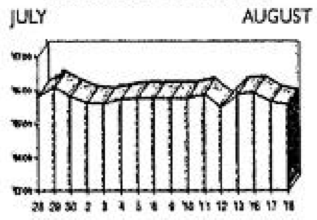
INTEREST RATES

August 18, 2004-
MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 18-Aug-04	MART 1 17-Aug-04
1 Month	7.3536	7.3411
3 Months	7.5714	7.5442
6 Months	8.4536	8.5654
1 Year	9.8821	9.9289
2 Years	10.32	10.2767
3 Years	11.255	11.2217
4 Years	11.7183	11.6696
5 Years	12.201	12.1675
7 Years	12.6683	12.6804
10 Years	13.1567	13.1446
20 Years	13.3661	13.3393
25 Years	13.4782	13.4696

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares close lower on oil, growth concerns

SHARE prices closed down 0.67 percent yesterday as high oil prices and forecasts for slower economic growth weighed on investor sentiment, dealers said.

The fall of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s (PLDT's) American Depositary Receipts in New York overnight Tuesday was also a dampener, they added.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 10.46 points to 1,556.37. It moved between a range of 1,553.23 and 1,569.54.

Turnover fell to 1.3 billion shares worth P463.32 million compared to 2.41 billion shares worth P680.3 million traded on Tuesday.

In the broader market, losers beat gainers 34 to 26, with 48 stocks unchanged.

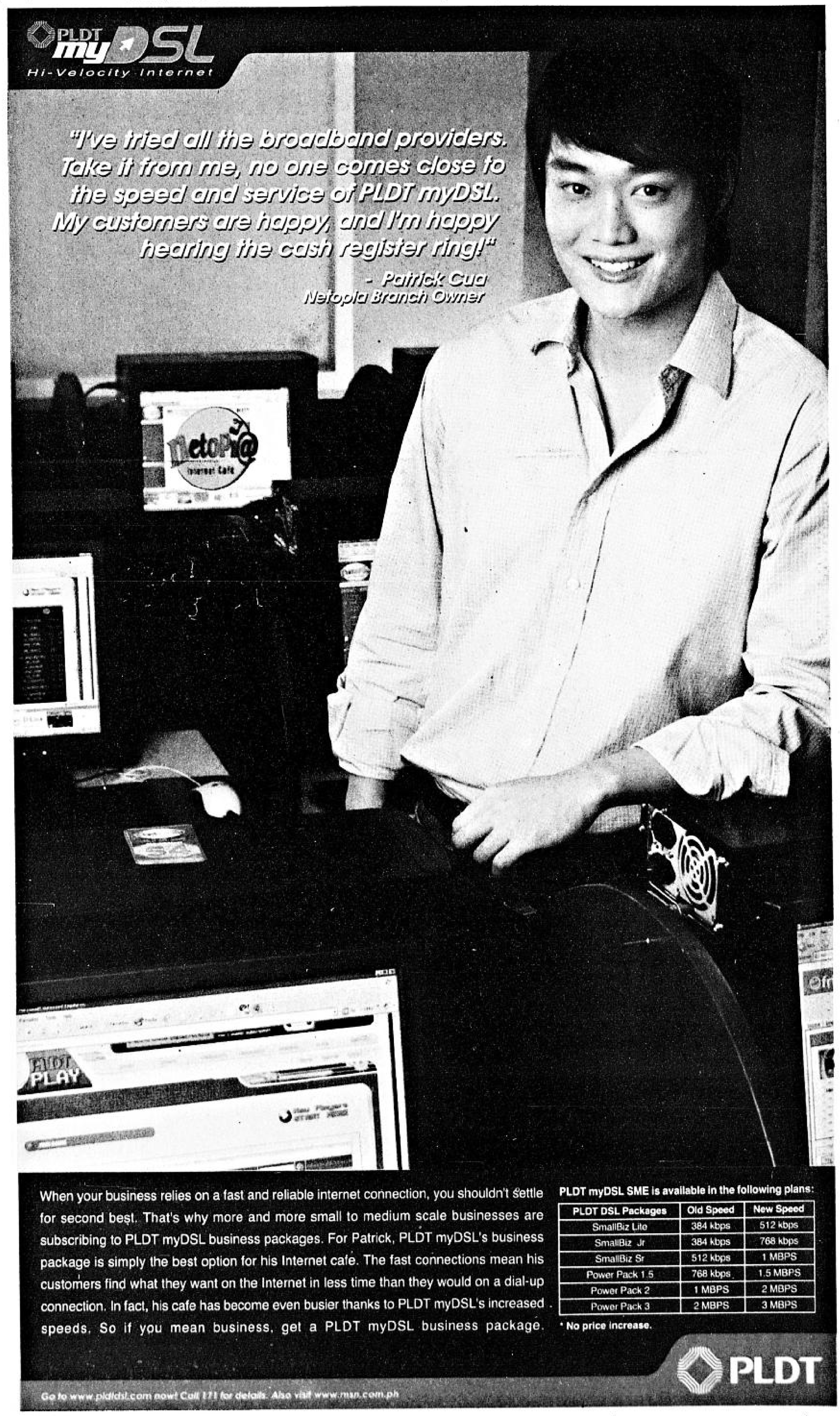
The all-shares index was up 4.44 points at 1,001.01. The commercial-industrial index retreated 16.11 to 2,485.81, while property fell 12.14 to 505.05. The mining sector was up 22.77 at 1,894.48, and oil was down 0.03 at 1.54. Banking and finance was up 3.06 at 451.82.

"Investors have opted to stay liquid at the moment, awaiting ... further corrections in the market," Accord Capital Equities analyst Ron Rodrigo said.

He added the index was likely to be rangebound with a downward bias in the coming sessions as the market consolidates after Tuesday's sharp fall.

"Most corporate earnings are out. Investors are now awaiting economic data before positioning (themselves) in the market," Rodrigo added.

Officials warned this week that the economy likely expanded at a slower rate of 5.2-6 percent in the three months to June, from a 6.4-percent pace in the first three months, due to softer agriculture output. **AFP**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NTC presses payment of ₱1.2B in past-due fees of telecom firms

By Clarissa S. Batino

TELECOM giants Smart Communications Inc., Pilipino Telephone Corp. and Globe Telecom Inc. owe the National Telecommunications Commission more than P1 billion in unpaid regulatory fees.

NTC Chair Ronald Solis said the Commission was pressing the collection of these unpaid dues from the three profitable telecom companies. These carriers are also the target of the government's new revenue measures aimed at taxing their windfall profits.

The NTC said Piltel alone owed the agency about P1 billion in unpaid supervision and regulatory fees.

An NTC official said Piltel had not paid the fees since 1999, thus the penalties and surcharges on top of the outstanding obligation of about P700 million.

Like any other agency, the NTC remits most of its collection to the national government. Last year, the NTC delivered about P1.8 billion to state coffers and hopes to contribute about P1.4 billion in 2004.

Solis said the Commission would send a collection letter to Smart, Piltel and Globe Telecom.

Smart netted P11.6 billion in the first half while Globe earned P6.9 billion for the same period. Even Piltel registered a net profit of P809 million from January to June after years of losses.

Smart and Piltel's parent firm, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., posted an all-time high P12 billion in net profit in the first half.

Smart and Globe owed the NTC about P100 million each, according to NTC director Edgardo Cabarios. He said the Commission had already filed an administrative case against Piltel, which was elevated to the Quezon City court.

"Piltel settled P9 million and they want the NTC to accept this as payment for 2003. But the Commission wants Piltel to settle the outstanding amount," Cabarios said.

The NTC official said Piltel had been using its financial losses as an excuse to justify its failure to pay.

Solis said the carriers must pay the fees because these were obligations to the government.

He said the fees to the NTC were separate from the taxes the telecom firms must pay the government.

The Arroyo administration is asking Congress to pass a bill taxing the windfall profits of telecom companies. Some lawmakers have filed a bill that would slap anew a franchise tax on telecom companies in lieu of the 10-percent value-added tax.

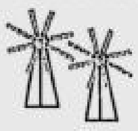
A franchise tax, according to the finance department, must be paid by phone carriers for the use of the country's air waves. Finance officials said the tax was separate from the fees and charges collected by the NTC.

Cabarios said Smart was accusing the NTC of double-charging. "Smart said we assessed them based on the number of channels or time slot of their GSM network," he said.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Other sources of energy



Geothermal:
proven resources
2,647 MW
potential
4,790MW

ENERGY SUPPLY	2004	2013
Imported oil	36 %	30 %
Wind, Solar & Biomass	31	25
Geothermal	8	8
Imported coal	8	8
Natural gas	7	11
Oil	2	3
Coal	3	6
Imported gas	0	4
Hydro	5	5

Natural gas:
potential
additional 4,220MW
by 2012

Coal:
additional 2,970 MW
within 10 years

Source: Department of Energy

THE COUNTRY aims to improve energy self-sufficiency from 55.5 percent in 2004 to 58.2 percent in 2013 by using and developing alternative energy sources like geothermal, natural gas, wind and coal. In 1999, use of geothermal energy saved the government $318.21 million in oil purchases. Natural gas is being promoted for use by industrial park locators, public vehicles and as replacement of LPG in cooking. Based on a study, the country has wind potential of 76,000 MW spread over an area of 11,000 square kilometers. Coal demand is seen to increase as 2,970 MW additional capacity will be installed within 10 years.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

SMC raises ₱4B from local debt mart

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL Corp., the country's biggest food and beverage firm, has raised P4 billion from the local debt market for general corporate funding, sources familiar with the transaction said.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), the company said it has entered into facility agreements with a syndicate of lenders and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. as facility and paying agent for the issue of P4 billion worth of fixed-rate and floating-rate corporate notes.

The debt notes will mature in five years. The auction was conducted last Friday.

Sources said the debt issue was 2.1 times "oversubscribed," which indicated a hefty demand for the private debt offering.

A total of 13 lenders—a mix of local and foreign banks, trust departments, insurance companies and retirement and pension funds—made up the syndicate of lenders who subscribed to the debt offer.

While the company did not indicate the purpose for its debt offering, sources told the INQUIRER that SMC might use the money possibly for expansion of local operations or possible acquisitions in the country since it was raised using the local currency.

Sources added that it was not for regional expansion since this would have required the company to raise the amount in foreign currency.

The price for the fixed-rate portion of the notes was 11.25 percent, a discount to the government's 5-year treasury notes, which was at 12.002 percent as of Aug. 13.

The floating-rate credit spread was at 100 basis points above the three-month Philippine treasury benchmark yield, sources said.

SMC earlier said it completed its purchase of a 50-percent stake in Australia's biggest juice maker Berri Ltd.

The deal earlier valued Berri at roughly $234.5 million (P13.11 billion). SMC has yet to disclose its acquisition price but industry sources said about half of the enterprise value was assumed by SMC.

SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE

Landbank to sell ₱19B worth of NPAs

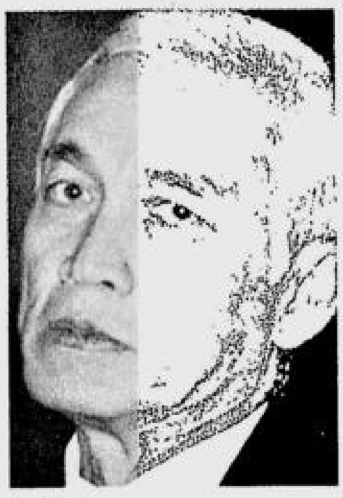
By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED Land Bank of the Philippines is set to fast-track the auction of P17-P19 billion worth of non-performing assets using the Special Purpose Vehicle framework, expected to be the largest sale of bad assets in the Philippines.

Beaux Pontak, senior manager of Ernst & Young, which was tapped by LandBank as financial adviser for the transaction, said in an interview with the INQUIRER that the bidding would likely be completed by October this year.

Landbank president Margarito Teves, who recently went on a roadshow in Japan, earlier identified three potential bidders as US investment banks Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch as well as Japan-based Shinsei Bank.

Pontak said the transaction portfolio offered by the bank was an attractive investment, consisting of about 100 accounts which were a combination of large corporate non-performing loans and foreclosed assets. There were about 250 collateral and settled assets.


TEVES

He said the completion of the transaction would free up significant resources for Landbank, the country's third biggest lender.

"It takes an extraordinary amount of resources to manage NPLs. It's a big distraction to their mandate of countryside development," Pontak said.

E&Y, on behalf of Landbank, has solicited the support of multilateral lenders Asian Development Bank and International Finance Corp. to lower the cost for the NPL buyer through a third party acquisition financing.

This means that through ADB and IFC's private sector lending windows, a loan could be provided to the successful bidder usually amounting to half of what the buyers are willing to pay.

He explained that the portfolio offered by Landbank was attractive as 81 percent of all borrowers had some form of collateral. He also noted that 75 percent of the appraised real property assets were located in the adjacent Southern Tagalog and National Capital Regions.

Based on the bank's roadshow presentation, the portfolio will likely be bid out in one or two pools. If more than one pool is used, it will likely be split into an NPL pool and a settled asset pool.

LandBank is set to pre-register and capitalize the SPVs to be used for the transaction prior to the Sept. 19 statutory deadline.

The transaction structure will consist of an outright purchase of a 95-percent interest in the NPA pools by the winning bidders. Landbank will retain a 5-percent stake.

DOF ...

From page B1

proposed 10-percent ceiling was only the minimum.

"It is hoped that with these extra funds the Ombudsman will be able to effectively perform its mandate," said Roxas.

Under Senate Bill No. 1726, 10 percent of the value of the properties illicitly acquired by corrupt officials and forfeited in favor of the government will be earmarked as new funding for the Ombudsman, on top of its annual budget of a measly P500 million.

Presently, all forfeited properties and assets go back to the national coffers under the Unexplained Wealth Forfeiture Law, or Republic Act No. 1379.

"We have to augment the financial resources of the Ombudsman in order to demonstrate to all and sundry that the government is bent on waging war on official corruption," he said.

The Ombudsman, as an anti-graft agency, has a staff of 1,100 overseeing 1.4 million public officials and employees, while Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption has a staff of 1,060 watching over a bureaucracy of 150,000.

He said it was evident that the effectiveness of any anti-corruption body was directly related to its financial and human resources.

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Partial List of Workshop Topics

Track 1. Measurement and Value
1.1 Current Trends on Measuring and Reporting on CSR
1.2 Increasing shareholder value s through CSR
1.3 What companies need to know about Social Auditing
1.4 Benchmarking CSR Practice

Track 2. Partnerships
2.1 Creating the right environment for NGOs and business collaboration
2.2 Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Sustainability: Strategic Partnerships as the way forward
2.3 Partnering with Rural communities
2.4 Why Private-Public Partnerships are necessary and how to make them work

Track 3. Integrity and Ethics (Codes of conduct/ Governance)
3.1 Self-regulation: Are we making progress?
3.2 Understanding Driving Forces of CSR in Asia compared to North America and Europe
3.3 Is CSR Coming of Age Among Asian companies?

Track 4. CSR Communications
4.1 Is talking about CSR a legitimate tool for a company?
4.2 What every company needs to know about effective CSR communication
4.3 The New Role of PR and Media in CSR

Track 5. Resource mobilization/ Financial sustainability
5.1 How to set up corporate foundations
5.2 Generating Resources Beyond your company for Effective CSR
5.3 Corporate giving and CSR practices beyond the original founders

Track 6. CSR in the workplace
6.1 The business case of Diversity
6.2 The business case for Youth Employment Programs: How every business can benefit
6.3 The business case of Employee Engagement

Partial List of Plenary Topics

1. Stand for something or stand for nothing
2. Corporate Social Resposibility: Boon or Bane?
3. Managing CSR in a context of a global enterprise
4. Responsible Competitiveness; A Race to top?
5. CSR within an Asian context: Altruism or Economics?
6. Development of anti-corruption in Asia

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BMW 316i 2001 Fern Green, 35,800km, P1,150,000	**BMW 323i** 1999 Imola Red, 36,200km, P1,600,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2004 Titanium Silver, 8,000km, P2,150,000	**BMW 325i Exec.** 2004 Titanium Silver, 17,700km, P2,590,000
BMW 316i 2000 Alpine White, 23,200km, P1,200,000	**BMW 318i Limo.** 2003 Titanium Silver, 19,400km, P1,680,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2004 Titanium Silver, 5,400km, P2,150,000	**BMW 325i Exec.** 2004 Titanium Silver, 9,500km, P2,690,000
BMW 316i 2002 Titanium Silver, 25,900km, P1,250,000	**BMW 318i Limo.** 2003 Orient Blue, 7,400km, P1,730,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2004 Black Sapphire, 5,100km, P2,150,000	**BMW 525i Exec.** 2004 Alpine White, 5,300km, P4,200,000
BMW 318i Exec. 2001 Black Sapphire, 29,200km, P1,500,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2003 Orient Blue, 11,700km, P2,100,000	**BMW 318i Sport** 2004 Topaz Blue, 13km, P2,500,000	

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BSP expects 10-11% increase in domestic money supply

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has estimated that local money supply would increase by as much as 11 percent this year and in 2005, as the institution sought to capture more undocumented sources of liquidity within the economy.

The projected growth in domestic liquidity or m3 over the two-year period was more than double the 4.3 percent actual year-on-year expansion in 2003 and the 5.7 percent growth in the first half of this year.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is the broadest measure of money circulating in the economy.

This includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

The official explained that the BSP was being conservative in projecting the growth in domestic liquidity as more sources of liquidity were being identified.

The BSP was probing undocumented sources of domestic liquidity, which could have an impact on foreign exchange trading as well as overall monetary policy.

So far, it has identified three sources:

- "under-the-table" reverse repurchase agreements (repos) and trust activities involving fund-raising by banks, using their securities holdings;
- instruments of trust, which is a fiduciary relationship in which one person, a trustee, holds title to property or assets for the benefit of another person, the beneficiary; and
- dollars brought in by overseas Filipino workers, which are not coursed through the banking system.

An increase in M3 is usually attributed to the expansion in the net foreign assets (NFA) of the monetary system and the increase in domestic credits to both the public and private sectors.

The steady growth in the NFA, in turn, hinges on the increase in the foreign assets of the monetary system. This comes mainly in the form of investments in foreign currency-denominated securities by banks and the BSP.

The seasonal inflow of dollars—such as remittances from overseas Filipino workers, which are sold to the banking system—also helps boost the NFA position.

An expansion in net domestic credits, on the other hand, depends on the market's borrowing appetite.

Although the BSP has shifted to an inflation-targeting approach to monetary management, a ranking official said domestic liquidity was still a key indicator to be monitored.

PVB gets fresh SSS credit line

THE SOCIAL Security System has extended a fresh P600-million credit line to Philippine Veterans Bank, a private commercial bank owned largely by Filipino World War II veterans and their heirs.

PVB president Ricardo Balbido said yesterday that the credit line would be used for relending activities.

"As part of the bank's commitment to our clients, we are taking advantage of this partnership with SSS to broaden our financial services," Balbido said.

The SSS, under Resolution No. 226, earlier approved the accreditation of PVB as a participating financial institution.

Through this conduit arrangement, SSS lending programs are made available for relending to PVB's qualified borrowers.

These include financing for tourism projects, hospitals, educational institutions, the SSS industry loan program and individual housing loans.

Each year, PVB allots 20 percent of its net income for programs and projects benefiting the war veterans, their widows and families.

PVB's total assets stood at P15.1 billion as of Dec. 31, 2003, 6.3 percent more than 2002. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Keep nuclear option open despite opposition—Perez

THE PHILIPPINES should keep the nuclear power option open to help supplement its energy sources even though it is an unpopular option at present, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said Wednesday.

"Nuclear power has been a component of countries that are energy-dependent—(South) Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, someday Vietnam. So it should always be an option," he told an Economist Corporate Network forum here.

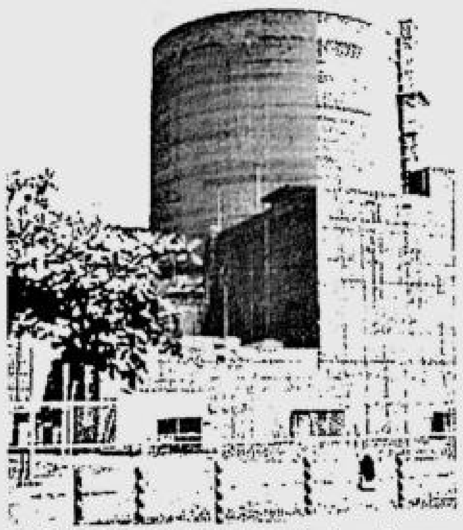
The Philippines imports nearly all of its oil requirements and has been hard hit by the rising cost of crude in world markets.

Perez added however that "politically, just as in Australia, New Zealand or Singapore, nuclear power is not yet acceptable to public opinion."

The official warned that electricity demand would equal installed generating capacity by 2008 at current economic growth rates, and the private sector should be encouraged to put up new power plants now because the debt-strapped national government was not in a position to do so.

"We need some new baseload and interim plants in (the main island of) Luzon before we hit that intersection in 2008," he said.

The government built a 600-megawatt nuclear power plant near Manila in the 1970s as it sought to diversify fuel sources amid a global oil crisis but it was never commissioned.



THE MOTHBALLED Bataan Nuclear Power Plant

Following cost overruns and construction delays that pushed up the price tag on the project to about $2 billion, then President Corazon Aquino mothballed the plant in 1986.

The government is still paying interest on funds borrowed to build the plant.

Last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo broached the idea of converting the Bataan nuclear plant into one that runs on natural gas. *AFP*

Aboitiz builds needed bridges to close widening digital divide

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PRINCIPAL of a public school in Cotabato remembers sending dozens of solicitation letters to congressmen, local government officials and a host of private corporations.

Only the Cebu-based Aboitiz Group Foundation Inc. (Agfi) and sister firm Cotabato Light and Power Corp. responded to her call.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Thus, with tears streaming down her face, she received her school's first batch of computers, that are guaranteed to bring her students closer to the technological advancements of the 21st century.

Agfi has been trying to bridge the so-called digital divide since 2000.

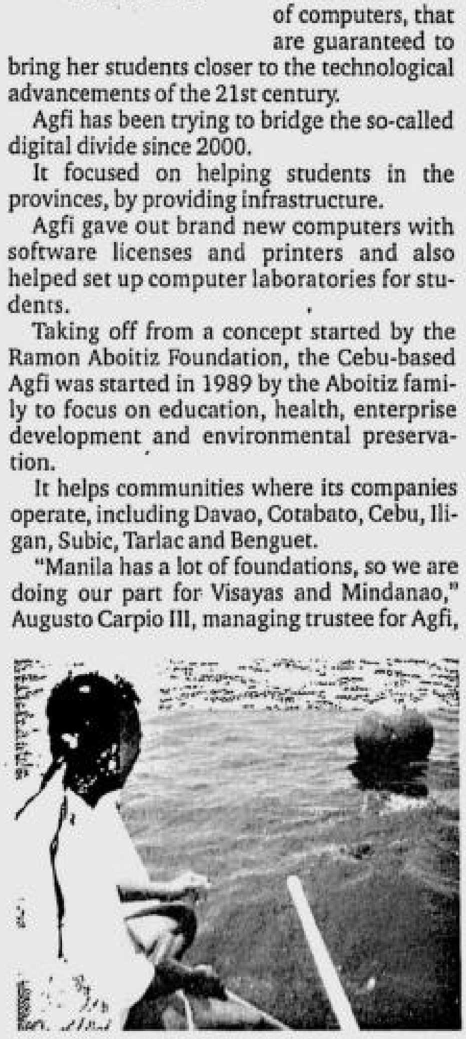
It focused on helping students in the provinces, by providing infrastructure.

Agfi gave out brand new computers with software licenses and printers and also helped set up computer laboratories for students.

Taking off from a concept started by the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, the Cebu-based Agfi was started in 1989 by the Aboitiz family to focus on education, health, enterprise development and environmental preservation.

It helps communities where its companies operate, including Davao, Cotabato, Cebu, Iligan, Subic, Tarlac and Benguet.

"Manila has a lot of foundations, so we are doing our part for Visayas and Mindanao," Augusto Carpio III, managing trustee for Agfi, said.



FISH Sanctuary in San Remigio

COMPUTER donations and training for students in Cansujong National High School in Talisay City

By the end of last year, it turned over 347 computers to different public schools in Cebu, Davao, Iligan, Cotabato, Benguet and Tarlac.

This year, Agfi plans to distribute 90 more.

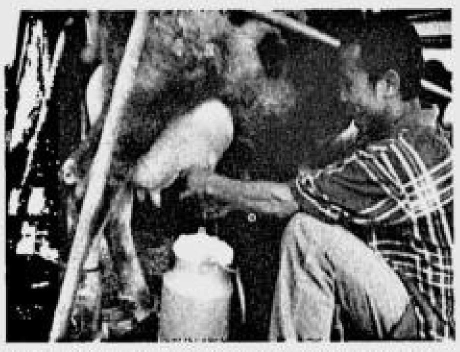
Aside from donating equipment to support basic education, Agfi also provides funds to build classrooms.

It already financed the construction of 14 new classrooms in Cebu, Davao and Tacloban schools last year.

Agfi also offers yearly scholarships and financial aid to some 1,000 high school and college students and those taking technical courses.

Agfi also started supporting education for the hearing impaired five years ago, under a special program with the Department of Education.

For street children in Cebu, it supports classes for some 250 students, which are held in barangay halls and chapels, even under mango trees.



AGFI supports cooperative that is into dairy in Garing, Consolacion

It also does its part in public health by building water pipes for communities that are not serviced by local utilities.

Agfi also donated a two-story health center in Cordova, Cebu to benefit 2000 residents who need maternal and child care.

Agfi does not stop at education and child care. It fosters enterprise development by giving out loans.

While it charges a 2-percent interest a month, it gives an incentive by slashing 1 percent off of the debt when it is paid on time.

"It is to teach them what commitment is about," Carpio said.

The foundation has a budget of roughly P2 million a year for loans to Cebuano farmer groups or women's organizations.

Agfi likewise does its part in environmental preservation.

In Davao City, a turtle nesting site was found on an Aboitiz-owned property.

With the aid of the city government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the area has been declared a sanctuary.

There is also a fish sanctuary in Cebu, where the community in the municipality of San Remigio volunteered to maintain the sanctuary.

"In the years to come, we will continue to improve our programs and projects and create more opportunities in areas where our companies operate," Agfi chair Jon Ramon Aboitiz and president Erramon Aboitiz told foundation members last year.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 18, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	6,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	89,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	40.5	40.5	40	40.5	107,900
China Banking Corp.	535	535	535	535	1,280
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39.5	39	39.5	79,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26	25.5	25.5	117,400
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	1,800
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	2,800
Security Bank Corp.	21	21	21	21	27,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	3,424,000
Bankard Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	40,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2210	2220	2210	2220	1,480
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1510	1515	1510	1515	840
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20.25	20	20.25	17,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.65	790,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	870	870	865	865	21,650
Ipeople Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.44	410,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.043	0.043	1,900,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	1,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.46	2.46	18,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.55	2.65	2.55	2.65	5,528,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1260	1265	1245	1245	78,150
Ivantage Corp.	0.62	0.67	0.62	0.63	6,280,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15	15.25	15	15	18,300
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	23.75	23.25	23.25	268,000
Petron Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	1,160,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.1	163,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	142,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	30,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.75	4.1	3.75	4.05	7,826,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	1,720,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	1,650,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	33,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	24.75	25	24.75	25	33,400
RFM Corp.	0.79	0.79	0.75	0.76	1,150,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	490,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57.5	56.5	57.5	190,900
San Miguel Corp. B	69	69	69	69	429,700
Universal Robina Corp.	7	7	7	7	467,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	4,330,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.96	1.02	0.96	1	950,000
APC Group Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	400,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.54	1.58	1.44	1.44	22,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	1,900
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.5	5,480,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.125	400,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	20,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.34	1.24	1.3	17,468,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	60,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	3.05	3.25	3.05	3.25	49,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24	24	23.75	24	419,500
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.0725	11,700,000
Ionics Inc.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.34	280,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	60,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	3,100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	1,200,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.1	1,167,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	2,110,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	32,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	140,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	320,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.4	32,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	900,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	1,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.67	0.69	0.66	0.67	6,760,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	890,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	40,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	21.25	21.25	20.5	20.5	505,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.2	6.5	6.2	6.5	30,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.2	6,680,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	1,120,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	20,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.95	7,820,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	750,000
SM Development Corp.	1	1	1	1	318,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.6	12,866,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	130,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	22,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.25	3.3	3.2	3.2	52,000
Benguet Corp. A	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	21,000
Benguet Corp. B	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	1,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	320,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	1,910,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.017	453,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.017	0.02	0.017	0.019	327,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	58,000,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	710,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	270,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	25,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	30,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Pacifica	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	8,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.44	2.4	2.42	251,000

DISCLOSURES

A.SORIANO Corp.'s 300,000 shares were bought by its wholly owned subsidiary, Anscor Consolidated Corp.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. entered into facility agreements with the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. as facility, registrar and paying agent and a syndicate of lenders for the issue of P4 billion in Fixed Rate Corporate Notes and Floating Corporate Notes.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 500,000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Petroenergy Resources Corp.** were Delfin Lazaro, Helen Dee, Cesar Buenaventura, Rizalino Navarro, Milagros Reyes, Susanne Santos and Yvonne Yuchengco.

* * *

FIL-Estate Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 23, 8:30 a.m. at the Garden Ballroom of Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. Stockholders of record as of Aug. 22 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ATLAS Cement Corp., which is 10 percent owned by Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp., estimates an income of P3.227 billion from the sale of its shares in Union Cement Holdings Corp. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

August 18, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.809258	1.000000	55.7220
Japan	Yen	0.007355	0.009088	0.5064
United Kingdom	Pound	1.479971	1.828800	101.9044
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103757	0.128212	7.1442
Switzerland	Franc	0.651105	0.804570	44.8322
Canada	Dollar	0.619172	0.765111	42.6335
Singapore	Dollar	0.472560	0.583942	32.5384
Australia	Dollar	0.578124	0.714388	39.8071
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.146629	2.652590	147.8076
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.215797	0.266660	14.8588
Brunei	Dollar	0.471184	0.582242	32.4437
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000108	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.019505	0.024102	1.3430
UAE	Dirham	0.220332	0.272264	15.1711
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.235700	68.8557
Argentina	Peso	0.269080	0.332502	18.5277
Brazil	Real	0.270112	0.333778	18.5988
Denmark	Kroner	0.134504	0.166207	9.2614
India	Rupee	0.017486	0.021608	1.2040
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212991	0.263193	14.6656
Mexico	New Peso	0.071439	0.088277	4.9190
New Zealand	Dollar	0.537177	0.663790	36.9877
Norway	Kroner	0.120715	0.149167	8.3119
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013798	0.017050	0.9501
South Africa	Rand	0.124959	0.154412	8.6041
Korea	Won	0.000699	0.000864	0.0481
Sweden	Kroner	0.108479	0.134048	7.4694
Syria	Pound	0.022399	0.027678	1.5423
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023787	0.029394	1.6379
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000422	0.000522	0.0291

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE SCRAP/JUNK ITEMS
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : September 2, 2004, 2:00 PM, Solarium Multi-Purpose Rooms, Bldg.-1 Ground Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP), Napot Point, Morong Bataan:

Item Description and Location		Minimum Bid Price
1. One (1) lot of scrap items consisting of the following		P 18,493,563.00/lot
a) assorted cables, insulated & bare	Block 8, MCD, BNPP	
b) ductile pipes, flat bars, steel plates	Block 9, MCD, BNPP	
c) various crane parts, scaffoldings, steel planks, pedestals, skids, pipes, plates, channels & other scrap metals	Switchyard Area BNPP	
d) scaffolding, channels, rebar cutter, steel bender, steel tower cuttings over-head cranes, steel forms & assorted scrap metals	Rebar Fabrication Area-BNPP	
e) One (1) lot junk heavy equipment motor vehicles, genset, steel ramps junk auto parts, lathe machines, trusses, crane booms, and other scrap metals	Motor Pool Area BNPP	
f) One (1) lot scrap items consisting of wire ropes, heating and welding machines, gas cylinders, and other unserviceable items	TEMP-FACIL BNPP	
g) Seven (7) units cylindrical tanks, various sizes	Various Areas BNPP	
h) One (1) steel structure	MIESCOR Fire Station	

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY OF THE BIDDER OR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY AND ONE (1) COPY OF VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVERS LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P2,000.00/set from S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 PM Aug. 30, 2004. Site or Ocular Inspection and Pre-Bid Conference for the items for sale at BNPP shall be at 1:00 PM August 31, 2004.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – August 19, 20 & 21, 2004)

ERRATUM

In the ad of **Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas** published in this newspaper last Friday, August 13, items number 11-16 under envelope #1 have been unintentionally omitted. See corrected material on page A15.

Our Apologies

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF ONE-YEAR WASTE OIL GENERATION FOR EMB-DENR ACCREDITED WASTE TREATERS ONLY
"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : Aug. 30, 2004, 2:00 PM, Solarium Multi-Purpose Hall, Building-1 Ground Floor, NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the one year waste oil generation from the following

	Plant and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1.	**PANAY Diesel Power Plant-1** Brgy. Tabugon, Dingle, Iloilo Province	P 3.260 / Liter
2.	**BOHOL Diesel Power Plant** Dampas, Tagbilaran City, Bohol Island	P 3.260 / Liter
3.	**POWER BARGE – 101** Brgy. San Juan, Maribojoc, Bohol Province.	P 3.250 / Liter
4.	**POWER BARGE – 102** Brgy. Obrero, Lapuz, Iloilo City.	P 3.255 / Liter
5.	**POWER BARGE – 103** Pier, Estancia, Iloilo Province.	P 3.260 / Liter
6.	**POWER BARGE – 104** Brgy. Obrero, Lapuz, Iloilo City	P 3.260 / Liter
7.	**BATAAN Combined-Cycle Power Plant** Brgy. Luz, Limay, Bataan Province.	P 3.250 / Liter
8.	**CEBU Diesel Power Plant – 1** Colon, Naga, Cebu Province	P 4.400 / Liter

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S / CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO PhP 120,000.00.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN 2003 ORIGINAL (OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY) FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY.
3. VALID ACCREDITATION FROM EMB-DENR FOR WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY AND AS WASTE TRANSPORTER, INCLUDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PERMIT TO TRANSPORT, WASTE MANIFEST FORM AND CERTIFICATE OF TREATMENT ALL ACKNOWLEDGED BY EMB-DENR.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding must present the original accreditations from EMB-DENR and may secure the official bid form at P1,000.00/set from Mr. Samuel V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Ground Floor Building-I, NPC Head Office, AGham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 924-5384. **Deadline for issuance of bid forms is 4:30 PM August 27, 2004.** Attendance to the Pre-bid Conference on August 27, 2004 at 2:00 PM is mandatory for all bidders.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – August 18, 2004)

NFA to construct corn dryer mat in Wao, Lanao del Sur

THE National Food Authority is set to construct a corn dryer mat in the agency's Integrated Farm Level Grains Center in Wao, Lanao del Sur.

The project, with an estimated cost of P6.2 million, will serve the drying and other post harvest needs of corn farmers across the province.

A dryer mat has 2 mechanical dryers, 3 corn shellers, 2 prime movers, 1 towing vehicle and 3 dryer sheds. The mobile dryer may be easily towed to the corn field for on-farm drying.

The project aims to serve farmer-cooperative members of the LABUCO Coops Federation with members in Wao; Banisilan, North Cotabato; and Kalilangan and Kadingilan in Bukidnon.

Farmer leaders in Lanao have expressed their enthusiasm and recognized the NFA for this meaningful project.

Prior to the project's implementation, a dialogue was conducted between the NFA and 14 corn farmer cooperatives in Lanao. The NFA informed the corn farmers on the benefits of the said dryer mat.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TASK FORCE ENGINEERING, ASSESSMENT & MONITORING
DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue
Pasig City, Philippines

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

IFB Number : SEMP'02-DepED-BEFP-2004-001 August 9, 2004
Loan No. 7118 PH
Project Title : CY 2002 Social Expenditure Management Project 2 (SEMP 2) 10% Unallocated Portion
Contract Title : Construction of Two Storey, Six Classrooms at Don Jose Monfort Memorial High School, Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for the Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to provide a budget support facility towards the financing of the Social Expenditure Management Project 2 (SEMP 2) in various currencies. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this facility will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts for the Basic Education Facilities Program (BEFP) to be implemented by the Department of Education (DepED).
2. The Department of Education (DepED) through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of DepED Central Office, DepED Complex, Pasig City now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the bidding of the Construction of Two (2) Storey, Six (6) Classrooms at Don Jose Monfort Memorial High School, Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo.
3. For purposes of this bid, eligible bidders must have experience in works of a similar nature and complexity over the last five years.
4. Interested eligible bidders may acquire a complete set of bid documents starting August 16, 2004 upon submission of a letter of intent to the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) at DepED Central Office, DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City, Tel. No. 636-6543; or at DepED Iloilo Division Office, Luna St., Iloilo City. A complete set of bid documents will be available for a non-refundable fee of: Php 3,000.00.
5. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of the Contract are provisions of the World Bank Standard Bidding Documents, Procurement of Works.
6. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of three (3%) percent of total bid price in the form of a bank guarantee; cashier's/manager's check or an irrevocable letter of credit.
7. Pre-Bid Conference and Bid Opening dates are as follows:

Venue	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Opening
DepED Iloilo Division Office, Luna St., Iloilo City	August 31, 2004, 2:00 PM	September 16, 2004, 10:00 AM

8. The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid; or to annul the bidding process or reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without incurring any liability to Bidders.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary and Chair, Bids and Awards Committee
DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

(PDI–Aug. 12 & 19, 2004)

Open source conference aims to entice enterprises

INITIALLY focused on the "hardcore techies," the Philippine open source movement is seen going mainstream, as it sets its eyes on the enterprise market citing that users of this sector are considered "the real movers of (the) open source movement."

This was the observation made during the press conference of the upcoming Philippine Open Source Conference 2004 (touted as the "biggest open source event in the country"), recently held at the EDSA Shangri-La Plaza Hotel Ballroom. The said open source event, organized by Media G8way Corporation in cooperation with Imperium Technologies, Inc., has been slated also at the EDSA Shangri-La Plaza Hotel this August 17 to 19.

The theme of the open source conference is "Open source goes mainstream," which, according to Fernando Contreras, Jr., president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Imperium Technologies, is happening now as companies worldwide are already adopting open source into their systems.

OBITUARIES

Engr. WILLIAM J. TAN, JR.

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 53.

His bereaved wife **Mel Samonte Tan**; children **Maemae, Joyjoy, Ian** and **Ina**; father **William** (†) and mother **Gloria**; brothers and sisters; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels in Bacolod City.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 22, 2004 after the 1:30 p.m. Mass at the Queen of Peace Parish in Bacolod City.

CARLOS SAN JUAN ANIAG

Died on the Grace of our Lord
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 78.

His bereaved family; wife **Fe**; children **Oyet – Joan, Olive – Mike, Tommy – Jay, Tan, Cindy – Yuri** and **Christian**; grandchildren **Jan, James, Kiel, Enya, Miko** and **Christine**.

His body lies in state at the Dulce Memorial Chapels, Jasper Chapel (2nd Floor) 2926 Jose Abad Santos Ave., cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila.

There will be a Mass at 11:00 a.m. at Seventh-Day Adventist Yangco Church. Interment will follow at Eternal Gardens Memorial Park, Caloocan City.

Our Dearly Beloved

Amador R. Recto

has peacefully joined the Lord
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 70.

His loving wife Nedy; children Nancy and Gerry, Noriz and Arnold, Noreen and Bobby; grandchildren Lean, Brax, Gernan, Paulene, Francine, Simon, Trish and Miguel rejoice for he has found eternal peace and salvation.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 12A, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation is at 12:00 noon of Friday, August 20, 2004 at Funeraria Paz Crematorium.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord." — 2 Corinthians 5:8

Cecilia Borja Santiago

of Cabanatuan City

*Peacefully joined her Creator and loving husband **Aureliano***
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 87.

Her children **Olga** & **Max Magdato**; **Olive** & **Sunier Nocon**; **Oscar** & **Mellie Pineda**; **Orly** & **Rose Casiño**; **Edgar** (†) & **Aida Reyes**; **Evelyn**; **Angie** & **Jimmy Sebastian**; and **Ernie** & **Marivic Caluag**; grandchildren, **Paul**; **John** & **Liza**; **Harold** & **Althea**; **Hazel**; **Harry Hanneh**; **Margaret**; **Michelle**; **Giovanni**; **PJ**; **JR**; **Junior**; **Jane**; **Joyce**; **Sheryll**; **Ryan**; **Gian**; **Marian**; and **Gladys**; and great grandchildren, **Giovanni Jr.**; and **Hallie**, sisters and brothers, in-laws, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends, request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antônio, Forbes Park, Makati City, with daily masses at 7:30 PM. She will be brought to Cabanatuan City on Saturday, 21 August and buried at the Family Mausoleum on Sunday, 22 August 2004.

FERMIN A. AMANTE

(MERALCO RETIREE)

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 66.

His bereaved wife **Teodorica Ilagan**; children **Fidelia** and **Marlon Ortiz-Luis**, **Flordeliza** and **Wilfredo Mendoza**, **Flerida** and **Romeo Ramos**; grandchildren **John Patrick**, **Zarina**, **Mark Raegon**, and **Melizza Anne**; brothers **Mario**, **Rodolfo** (†), **Jorge**, **Alberto**, and only sister **Ma. Corazon**; nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Faith Chapel of Don Bosco Parish, Pasay Road cor. Pasong Tamo, Makati City.

Interment will be on August 21, 2004, Saturday, at the Manila South Cemetery, after the 10 a.m. Mass to be officiated by Father Jerry Orbos, SVD.

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MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS Pawnshop, Alw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of February 2004 will be auctioned on Aug. 23, 8.30 am - Lanuza & Sons Auctioneer.
(PDI - August 19, 2004)

MUNOZ-FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, Roosevelt Ave., Katipunan, Diliman, Quezon City. All unredeemed pledges of MARCH 2004 will be auctioned on AUG. 23, 3:00 PM. - Lanuza & Sons - Auctioneer.
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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID FOR THE ACQUISITION OF NON-PERFORMING ASSETS THROUGH A SEALED-BID AUCTION SALE

Land Bank of the Philippines ("Landbank"), through its Non-Performing Assets Bids and Awards Committee ("NPA-BAC"), hereby issues this invitation to interested parties to apply for pre-qualification and to bid for the purchase of a portfolio of approximately 78 non-performing loans and 16 Real and Other Properties Owned or Acquired Assets ("ROPOA") located throughout the Philippines (the "Portfolio"). Land Bank reserves the right to change the composition of the Portfolio without prior notice. The Portfolio's Total Face Value is approximately Php 17.8 billion.

The Portfolio will be sold through a sealed-bid auction process (the "Transaction"). Detailed information regarding the Portfolio will be provided to each bidder that qualifies to participate in the Transaction.

Each interested party submitting pre-qualification documents will be required to pay a **TRANSACTION REGISTRATION FEE of USD$30,000** (net of bank wire charges) as a condition for pre-qualification. **THE TRANSACTION REGISTRATION FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE.** The only exception shall be in the case where an interested party pays the Transaction Registration Fee and is later deemed at Landbank's sole discretion not to qualify to participate, in which case the Transaction Registration Fee shall be refunded in its entirety.

Bidder Registration and Pre-Qualification Documents can be obtained at the following address:

The Chairperson, Non-Performing Assets Bids and Awards Committee
for the Sealed-Bid Auction of Non-Performing Assets
Land Bank of the Philippines
c/o Asset Recovery Group
30th Floor, Landbank Plaza, 1598 M.H. Del Pilar Street
corner Dr. Quintos Street, Malate, Manila, Philippines

Bidder Registration and pre-qualification documents may also be obtained at the following internet address: http://www.landbank.com/landbank/html/npaauction.htm

Interested parties that have duly accomplished the requirements set forth in the Bidder Registration and Pre-Qualification Documents will be evaluated and pre-qualified for participation in the Transaction.

A Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on August 30, 2004 to discuss details of the Transaction at the same address cited above.

Landbank reserves the right to reject any and all interested parties from participating in this Transaction.

(Sgd.) Chairman, Non-Performing Assets
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–August 19, 2004)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 526-01-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2004-186	1 lot supply, delivery and assembly of the following:		
	• Strength Gym Equipment	P 1,759,200.00	LBP Funds
	• Cardiovascular Gym Equipment	P 1,274,000.00	LBP Funds
	• Free Weights Gym Equipment	P 966,800.00	LBP Funds
2004-189	1 lot One (1) unit Power Transformer, 3,750KV Delta/480V Wye, 3-Phase, Oil Immersed, Pad Mounted, ALSTHOM, to include the dismantling/ pull out of the defective unit, relocation of other electrical equipment to give way for delivery, installation, supply of the necessary parts, equipment and components, commissioning and energization	P 4,500,000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on September 8, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on August 26, 2004, at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI–August 12 & 19, 2004)

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **Lerma Caluya Papa** has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from **AQUILINA** to **LERMA** in the birth certificate of **Lerma Caluya Papa** who was born on **4 January 1959** in **Banna, Ilocos Norte** and whose parents are **Santiago Caluya** and **Socorro Guarda.**

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than **24 August 2004**.

(Sgd.) **JUDY RABAGO MADES**
City/Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI—Aug. 12 & 19, 2004)

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"I sought the Lord, who answered me,
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Psalm 34.5

Luz Banzon Magsaysay

Peacefully joined the LORD,
her husband **President Ramon Magsaysay**
and daughter **Teresita Vargas**
on 17 August 2004 at the age of 89.

She is survived by daughter **Milagros** and husband **Cesar Valenzuela**, and son **Senator Ramon Magsaysay, Jr.** and wife **Marilou Kahn**; grandchildren **Ramon Jesus, Rafael, Maria Luz, Bro. Michael, Margarita, Francisco, Jude, Stewart, Chiho**; great grandchildren **Alexander, Alliester, Jaime, Miguel** and **Carmen**; sister **Rosario Banzon de Gala**; and other relatives.

Her remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Divine Child,
La Salle Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be at the North Cemetery, La Loma, Manila,
on 21 August after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

In lieu of flowers, donation may be made to Kuya Drop In Center,
or the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission, Inc.

MILAGROS "Agging" SANTOS-ESTEVANEZ

... peacefully joined our Creator
on August 17, 2004 at the age of 66.

Her bereaved husband, **Engr. Manuel M. Estevanez, Sr.**; children **Walter** and **Daisy, Arlene & Eric, Jun** and **Chie**; grandchildren **Miguel, Mariel, Gia, Jomel, Angel, Enzo** and **Sabine**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla Aurora B of Arlington East,
The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave.
cor. Mercedes Ave., Pasig City.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 22, 2004 at the Pasig Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

Our Dearly Beloved

ROSENDA GARONG COMIA-COBANGBANG

Passed away in the Grace of the Lord
on August 16, 2004 at the age of 77.

Her loving husband **Antonio** (†); children **Ariela** and **Michael, Arlene** and **Rony, Antonello** and **Hermenegilda, Arne** and **Louie, Alvin** and **Maya**; grandchildren **Emil, Vera, Aurelio, Iya, Aimee, Paul, Marianne** (†), **Thomas** (†) and **Marikit**; relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Chapel D, Loyola Memorial Chapels,
Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 22, 2004 at Garden of Eternity,
Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

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Peacefully joined his Creator
on August 16, 2004 at the age of 77.

His loving wife **ROSE**; his children and in-laws **JUN & BETH, GRACE & REY, ALICE** and his grandchildren request for prayers for his eternal happiness.

His remains lie at the Felicidad Chapel,
Arlington Memorial Chapels,
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, August 22, 2004
at the Eternal Gardens Memorial Park,
Baesa, Kalookan City.

RP opposes planned Asean air pact

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES has refused to participate in a proposed Asean multilateral agreement to liberalize air policies in the region, sources said.

The move is being spearheaded by Singapore and Brunei.

Sources quoting the country's recent position paper, which was submitted to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' secretariat, said the Philippines had opposed the multilateral open skies agreement.

"We don't want to participate in the plan to forge a multilateral agreement on open skies. We had expressed our objection in a position paper," a ranking government source said.

Aside from the Philippines, sources said Indonesia was also against the plan.

"We feel that air services agreement should be done bilaterally. The Philippines' situation is not the same as those of other countries such as Singapore and Brunei," according to another source.

Singapore, Brunei and Thailand signed early this year a three-way agreement that sought the liberalization of their air cargo policies.

The Philippines should have been a signatory to this agreement but pressure from flag carrier Philippine Airlines prevented government representatives from participating in the deal.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The liberalization of aviation policies in the region is being discussed actively in line with efforts to improve trade and investments in the region.

The United States and Europe are discussing opening up their respective aviation industry.

"Adopting open skies could not be done drastically. We just want enough time, say five to 10 years from today," the source said.

PAL has been opposing open skies arrangements. It said the local aviation industry and its workers would suffer under the lopsided deal that would only benefit foreign carriers.

While a multilateral air policy usually offers reciprocity, PAL said the Philippines would not likely get anything substantial from such a deal.

PAL said opening up the aviation sector would prejudice the operations of the local industry. Foreign airlines, it said, would be able to compete more aggressively by offering lower rates.

The Arroyo administration's policy is to pursue a gradual liberalization of the aviation sector to give local carriers enough time to adjust and prepare for a liberalized environment.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the government would pursue a "progressive liberalization of the air transportation sector."

A gradual opening up of the air industry would be done through encouraging constructive competition, increasing traffic rights, promoting missionary routes, and granting of incentives for investments in alternative gateways.

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November 12-14, 2004 at the Megatrade Hall 1:

Filipino Seafarers' Family Expo and Forum 2004
back-to-back with:
Pamilyang OFWs-SMEs Housing and Home Essentials Trade Fair 2004

December 10-12, 2004 at the Megatrade Hall 1:

Pamilyang OFWs-SMEs Milestones 2004
back-to-back with
Pamilyang OFWs-SMEs Food and Beverage Trade Fair 2004

For more information, contact the:

Pamilyang OFW-SME Network Foundation, Inc. Tel. Nos.: 912-58-03 and 437-16-60 * Fax No. 437-16-59 * e-mail address: gearcom@tri-isys.com

GOOD GOVERNANCE, RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP
Institute for Solidarity in Asia head Jesus Estanislao poses with San Fernando, Pampanga Mayor Mary Jane Ortega (left) and INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto during the launch of the Coalition on Good Governance and Responsible Citizenship in Makati City. Called Solidarity, the group commits itself to the improvement of public governance in society—from the national to the barangay.

Business proposes sea link between Brunei, Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—Because of its proximity and high purchasing power, Brunei Darussalam can be the best market for Mindanao right now, Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sofronio Jucutan said.

Jucutan said the private sector, with the help of the government, should immediately organize a trade mission to Brunei to forge linkages with businessmen there.

Recently, two Brunei officials visited the city and General Santos City to talk to local officials about the possibility of a direct sea link with the Philippines.

Brunei's Muara Port Deputy Director Hj. Souyono Salamat and Soekratis Daud, information technology head of PSA Muara Container Terminal, also met with the local chamber for the possibility of a business matching.

Jucutan said the two officials offered them very good rates such as free storage for up to 21 days.

"That's a very good incentive," he said.

Two years ago, a delegation from Mindanao, headed by Presidential Assistant Jesus Dureza and the Department of Trade and Industry conducted a trade mission to Brunei.

"But it's been two years and we have yet to come back," Jucutan said.

He said Brunei was a very good potential market "because they do not produce enough agricultural goods to fill their demand."

"They don't know how to plant rice because they can always buy it," he said.

Salamat said most products entering Brunei were coming from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

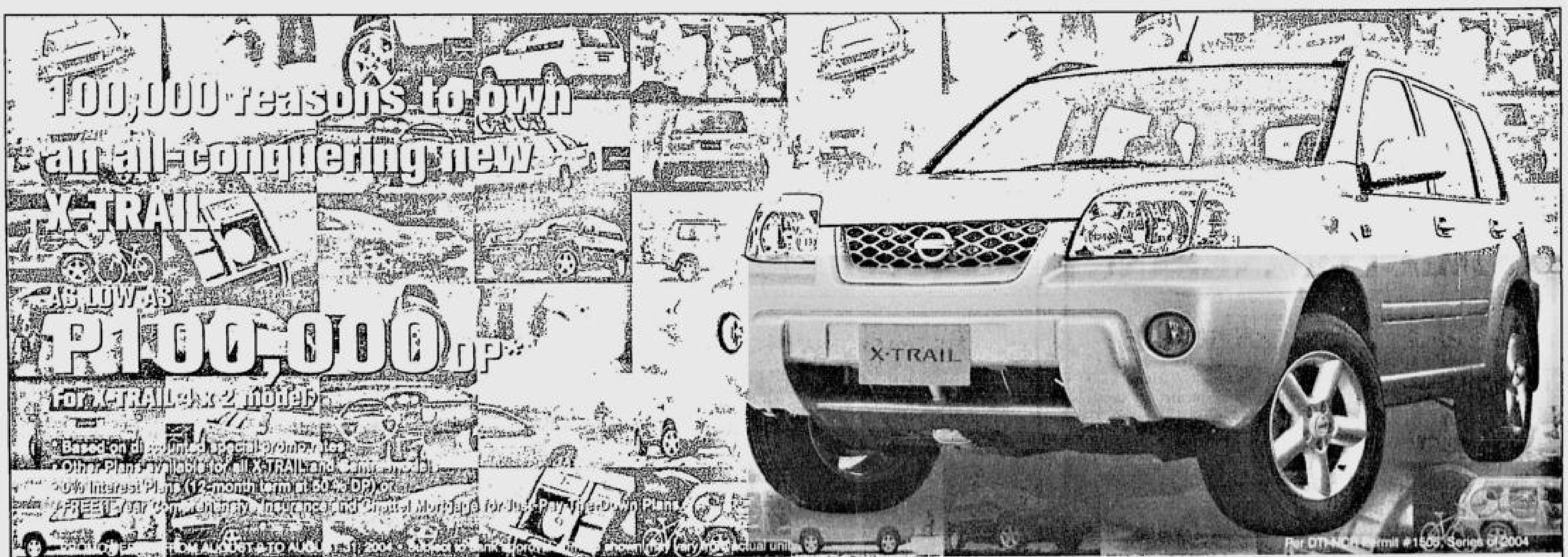
"The Brunei market is flooded with Thai fruits," he said.

He said that for Mindanao traders to compete with Malaysia and Thailand in terms of pricing of products, there should be a direct sea link between the Philippines and Brunei.

Currently, Mindanao products have to be shipped to Manila and then to Singapore before they could reach Brunei.

Salamat said this system had resulted in higher prices of Mindanao products.

He said a direct sea link between Mindanao and Brunei would cut down shipping time to only two days. *Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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SMITTEN BY ADRENALINE

The common thread between neophyte racers and daredevils

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Last of two parts)

THE PASSION for motorsports knows no boundaries, at least for neophyte circuit racers.

A convergence of people from different "walks and talks" is adding spice to the upcoming Tuason Racing School-Ford Lynx Cup Novice Series, which begins in earnest on Aug. 21 and 22, Sept. 25 and 26, and Oct. 23 and 24.

'Ms Extreme'

Meet now "Ms Extreme" whose hobbies include swimming in cave pools and scuba diving for shipwrecks, skydiving from 14,000 feet, and mountain climbing. And she still finds time to go into competitive horseback riding and indulge on racing on a much faster "horse" (she recently raced a modified Ferrari in an Italian racetrack.)

There you have the "X-resumé" of Geena Lopez who, at age 7 and the youngest in a brood of seven, was already scuba diving with her professional diver siblings. She was too young to carry her own aqualung tank then, so she went underwater "octopus"—meaning someone else carried her oxygen tank, which had an extra tube for her to breathe from.

Now at 34, Geena not only can carry the conventional two tanks on her back, but four. She became one of the first Filipino technical scuba divers in 1998 (her sister is also one herself). Watch those underwater documentaries showing divers with four tanks. That's pretty much how Geena looks like underwater.

Geena has also turned her above-water passion into a business. She owns the popular rock-climbing gym "Play Underground" at Rockwell. Above all this, she is a doting mom to three-year-old son Blade who would probably be like her when he grows up.

Her husband Ernie (president of ABS-CBN Publishing) is active in adventure sports and triathlons. Together, they climb, sky jump and scuba dive, and practically do everything else except in one activity: circuit racing. Here, Geena gets the driver's seat all by herself.

Nowadays, Geena, a Schumacher fan, is doubly proud. She just attended a Marlboro Red Racing School in Italy a month ago.

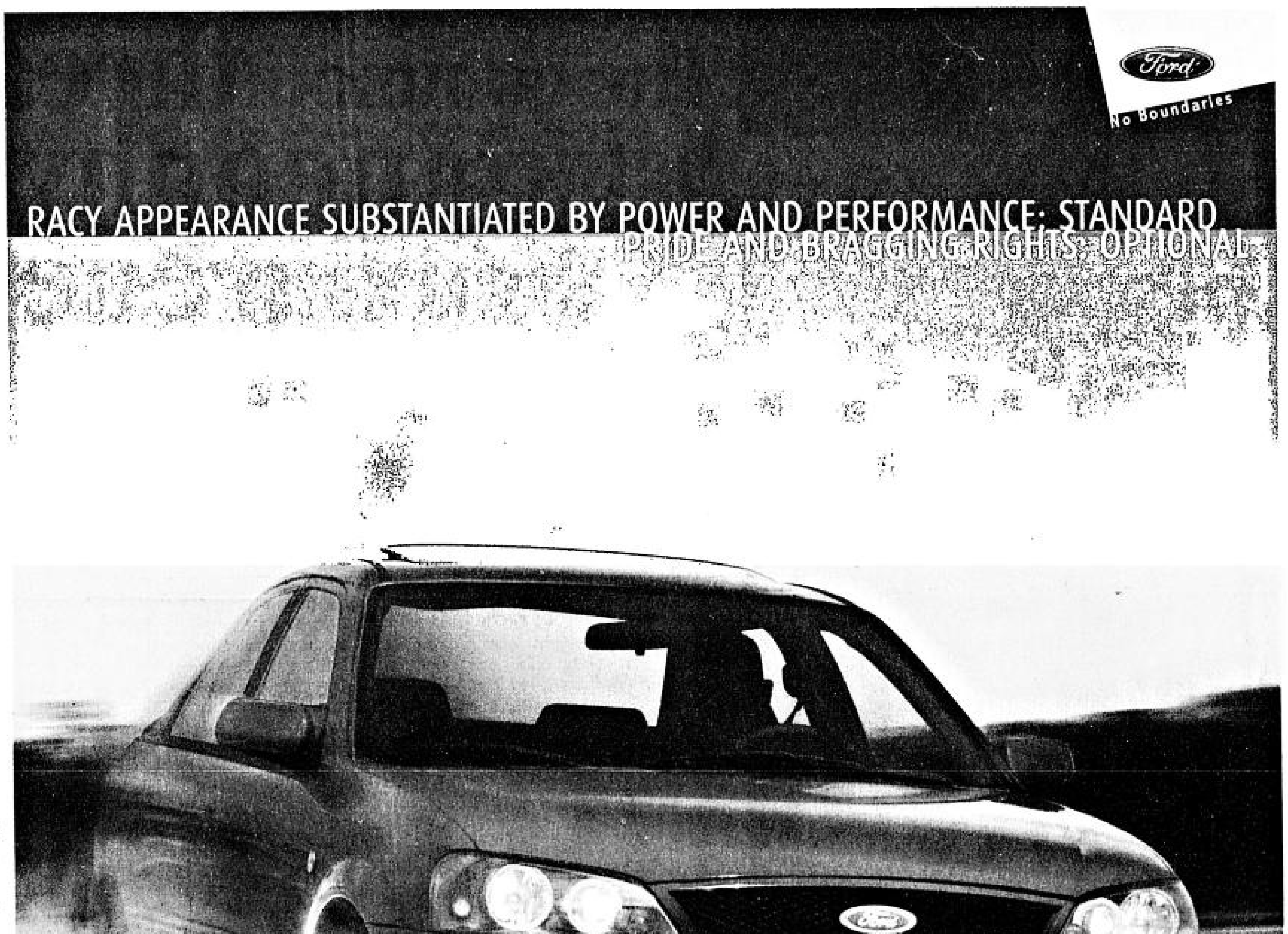
A text competition about Formula 1 and cars started her tour to Italy. The prize was irresistible: the chance to attend a red racing school in Italy for three days. After a series of treasure hunts and karting competitions, the field was scaled down to just 20 from a field of hundreds from five countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Philippines). She was among just five Filipinos chosen.

At the karting track, Geena dazzled the judges with her skills, and eventually awarded her the trip to Italy, becoming the only woman who had won. Judges were even more amazed when they learned Geena got her techniques just by watching F1 races on TV. In fact, Geena was often chaffeured, and on the rare occasions that she drove by herself, she drove an automatic.

Thus, the girl who made F1 races on TV more than just a spectator sport and into a success story on distance learning got to drive a race-setup Ferrari Modena in Italy.

From Italy, now back to Earth. Geena still thinks she has her hands full with the boys in the Ford Lynx Cup series (she's one of the two female competitors). And for someone who's used to uphill (and vertical) climbs, Geena is expectedly pragmatic. Cool and collected in

THE COMMON/ C2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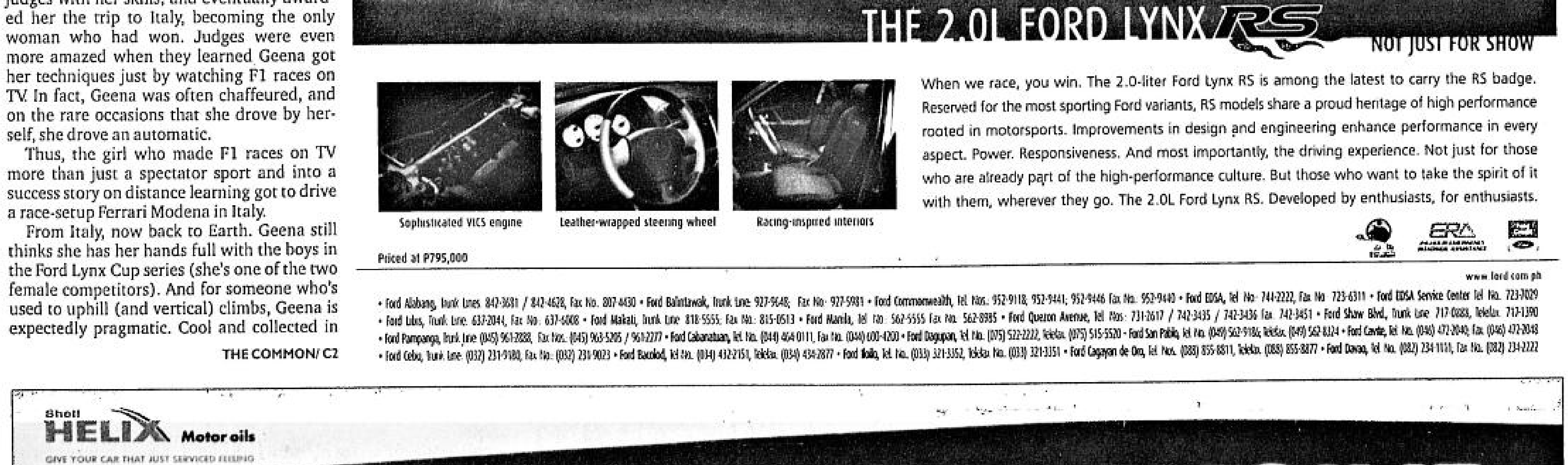
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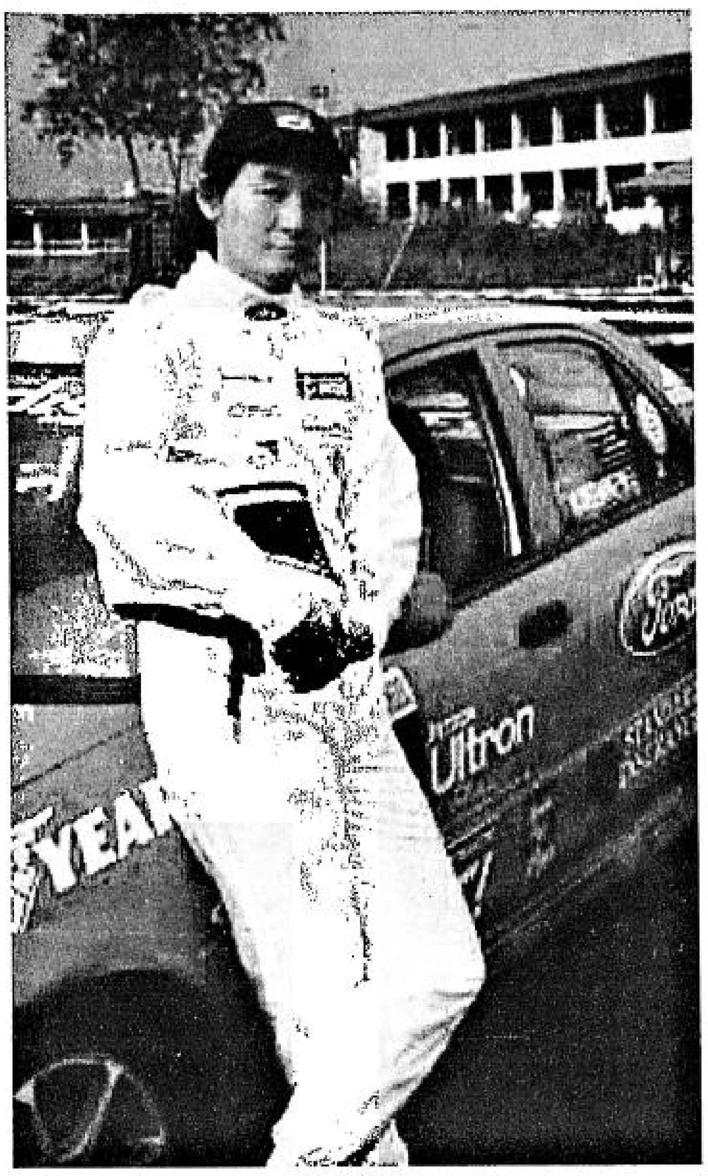

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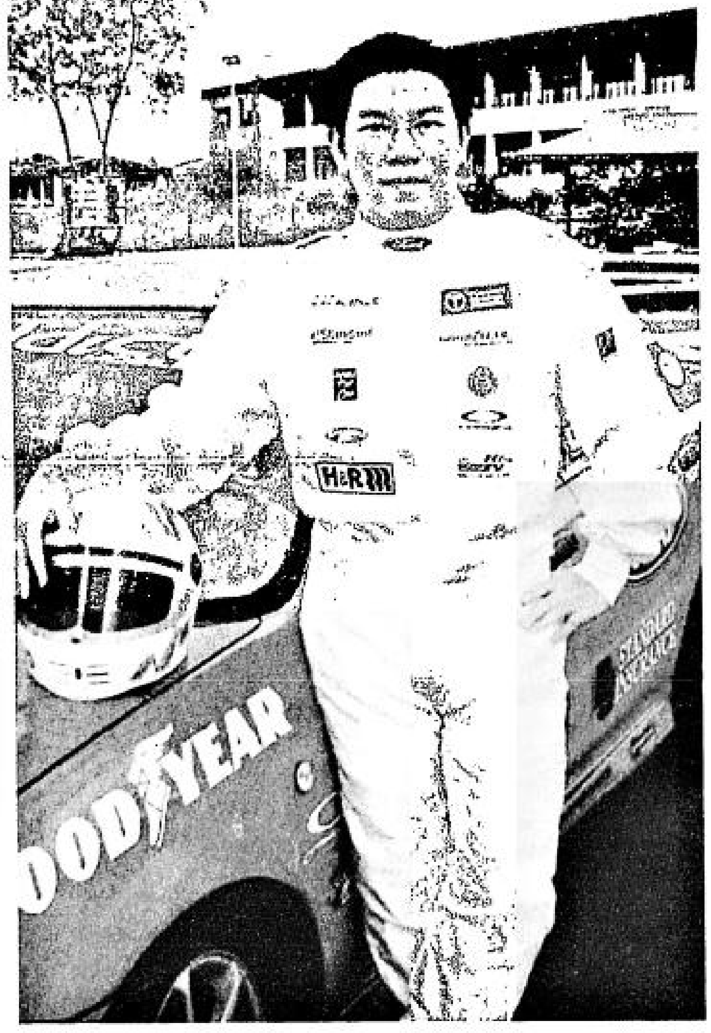
RANDY



GIBSON

The common thread between neophyte racers and daredevils

From page C1

her Oakley shades (her sponsor, by the way), she says she's in this for the experience and the fun of it. "I'm afraid of being afraid. I never want to be afraid, so I'll do anything except eat gross things."

Except for that last statement, Geena, we really thought you were "Fear Factor" material.

Broadcaster, serious racer

What's a 42-year-old former press secretary doing on a racetrack that doesn't have anything to do with horses and jockeys? Ask Mike Toledo, and he will give you the generic Palace reply: "It is never too late to enter the races. Like anything else, everything always starts with a vision or a dream, and then from there, you try to make things happen."

No objection there, your honor. Toledo had always wanted to be a lawyer since he was able to put the words "legal" and "eagle" together as a kid. So he envisioned himself to be one, and eventually became a lawyer at 24 then obtained his master's degree at the London School of Economics as a scholar. Soon after, he found himself working at the Angara law offices (Accra).

He set up a consultancy and law office and then became a legal consultant for the government during the Aquino and Ramos administrations. During Estrada's term, he became acting press secretary and presidential spokesperson.

All the time, from his student days to his stint in public service, his undeclared love for cars and racing lay dormant. He made cars an added motivation to his studies, however. At the time when his dad forbade him to have his own car while his classmates in UP Diliman were flaunting their own rides, he vowed to study even harder so he could be successful in life and buy nice cars someday.

That someday did come. Now he has in his garage a 320 E-class Benz, an Expedition, a Pajero and a Mazda Miata, among others. His dream car, of course, is a Ferrari, any top-of-the-line Ferrari.

His other dream—racing—is about to come rushing in as well. After all those years of harboring fantasies of racing and watching other people his age start racing ahead of him, Toledo is more than glad to finally have had the time and the resources to realize his dream of racing.

"If you're going to dream of something, you might as well aim for the stars. The important thing is if you don't achieve it, don't get disappointed. And on your way to doing that, don't do shortcuts—don't compromise your principles.

"If I may quote John F. Kennedy, what are ambitions for if they are not lofty?"

Laid-back speedster

Gibson Yu, 24, describes himself as a couch potato. This laid-back speedster assesses his chances of winning the Ford Lynx Cup as "Good."

How can a self-confessed couch potato like Gibson see himself winning a race? To understand how, you must see the kid with his butt off the sofa and on the driver's seat. Gibson may be soft-spoken and utterly lethargic in front of the boob tube, but he is totally the opposite on the racetrack. He may have a charming, even disarming, personality as a marketing manager of G&W Architects. But he can be totally intimidating when he's breathing down your neck at three-digit speeds. He's certainly someone to watch out for, if his exceptional performance in the basic and advance courses account for anything.

To show how studious Gibson is as a racing apprentice, he says he even practices the "heel-and-toe" technique even when the racing instructors are not around.

If things go his way at the Ford Lynx Cup, he says he wants to bring this success as far as he can—short of making a career out of it since, according to him, this would still be first and foremost a hobby.

He has been in love with cars since he was 5. He was caught driving on Edsa when he was 13 (his feet could reach the pedals—no problem there. What gave him away to the cops was his head—the officers couldn't see much of it above the dashboard). Now that it's perfectly legal for him to drive, he goes around in a BMW 3 series, a car he had been waiting five years to have.

Counting the cost of training, Gibson says the TRS class rate of P11,000 is relatively inexpensive. "Abroad, if you enroll in a basic or advance course in a racing school in the category of TRS—a class alone would set you back around $3,500."

And for that, the cost of learning is not an object. Nor will the celebrities who will be racing with him bother Gibson the least bit. "It's nice to see that if competitors like Mark (Bumgarner) succeed and be Formula drivers in the future, I can always say that I used to race with them."

He welcomes the fact that younger individuals are into racing.

Mega magic in 1

Cheery-faced Allen Ong, 23, dons the same disarming disguise as Gibson. They may look soft on the outside, but they're hard and fast, and taste like dust on the inside.

Like Gibson, Allen has a knack for marketing. He is a distributor of car batteries Mega Force and Magic Power, and both brands happen to be his sponsors in the Ford Lynx Cup. Like the names of the batteries he represents, Allen attacks turns and straightaways like a man charged with lightning and possessed of magic

Unlike Gibson, though, Allen was not crazy enough to drive a full-sized car on Edsa in his preteens. Instead, he was crazy about RCs (remote-controlled cars). His love for auto racing developed only fairly recently. During college, he used to go karting at Carmona.

Nevertheless, TRS instructors took notice of his potential during one of the TRS classes and urged him to join this season's races.

Now it's just a matter of days before Allen and everyone else in the class get to show off their own mega forces and magic powers behind the wheel.

From drag to circuit

And last but certainly not the least is Randy Paray, 20, a Cebuano who loves car racing as much as the next racer. He excels in the Need for Speed Underground arcade game and at karting. Both specialties won for him the P150,000 scholarship at the TRS-Ford Lynx Cup out of the more than 200 who competed.

Randy used to drag race in his home province of Cebu. With financial help from dad Jun, and technical expertise lent by friend Mato Tan and racing wisdom from teammates from Team ACR, he was able to set up a Honda Civic Hatchback with a B18 engine for his own drag car. Team ACR recently dominated the drag race competition in Cebu. Randy topped the bracket A category drag racing on April 4—his birthday.

He was first runner-up in the Quick 8 (competition of the eight fastest cars in the race).

Nevertheless, this born drag racer has had to make a number of adjustments since joining the Ford Lynx Cup. However, one advantage he sees in a circuit race is that anyone has a chance to correct any mistake in the next lap, unlike in drag races where one mistake can spell defeat. The one who makes the least number of mistakes is a strong contender, and for that Randy is optimistic he can make it in a seemingly never-ending race.

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IS it okay to install a nitrous oxide system on a motorbike?
—Jerry Somera of Marikina

Absolutely! In fact there are complete bolt-on nitrous kits designed specifically for motorbikes.

Nitrous works great on almost any car, bike, plane, jet-ski, boat—even a lawnmower if you want to get your garden trimmed in less time! Any engine whether two-stroke or four-stroke, from 50 cc to 1,500 cc—even though it's supercharged, turbocharged or naturally aspirated—can all be boosted with nitrous oxide.

The key is choosing the correct horsepower for a given application. As long as the system is fitted and used correctly to an engine in good condition without any weaknesses in the original design, then there is no reason to worry about premature engine wear or failure.

Nitrous oxide systems make additional horsepower by allowing an engine to burn more fuel than it normally can. Burning more fuel creates higher cylinder pressures that will push down on the pistons with greater force. This gives much more power!

But as the energy released in the cylinder increases so does the load on the various components that must handle them. If the increase in load exceeds the ability of the component to handle them, added wear takes place.

For many applications, an improvement from 1 to 3 full seconds in the quarter mile can be expected. The final results are affected by factors such as engine size, tires, jetting and gearing.

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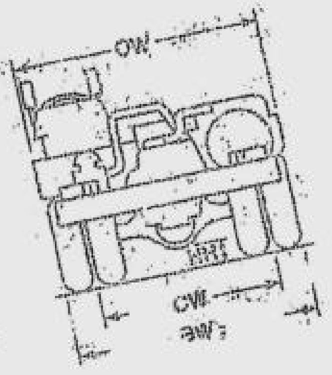

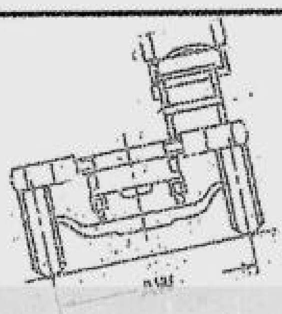

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1:30 PM Seminar B: Road Regulations and Restrictions for Trucks and Buses
3:30 PM Seminar C: Direct Injection Diesel Technology
7:00 PM Exhibit Halls Closed

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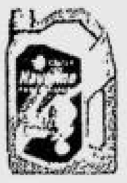

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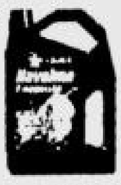

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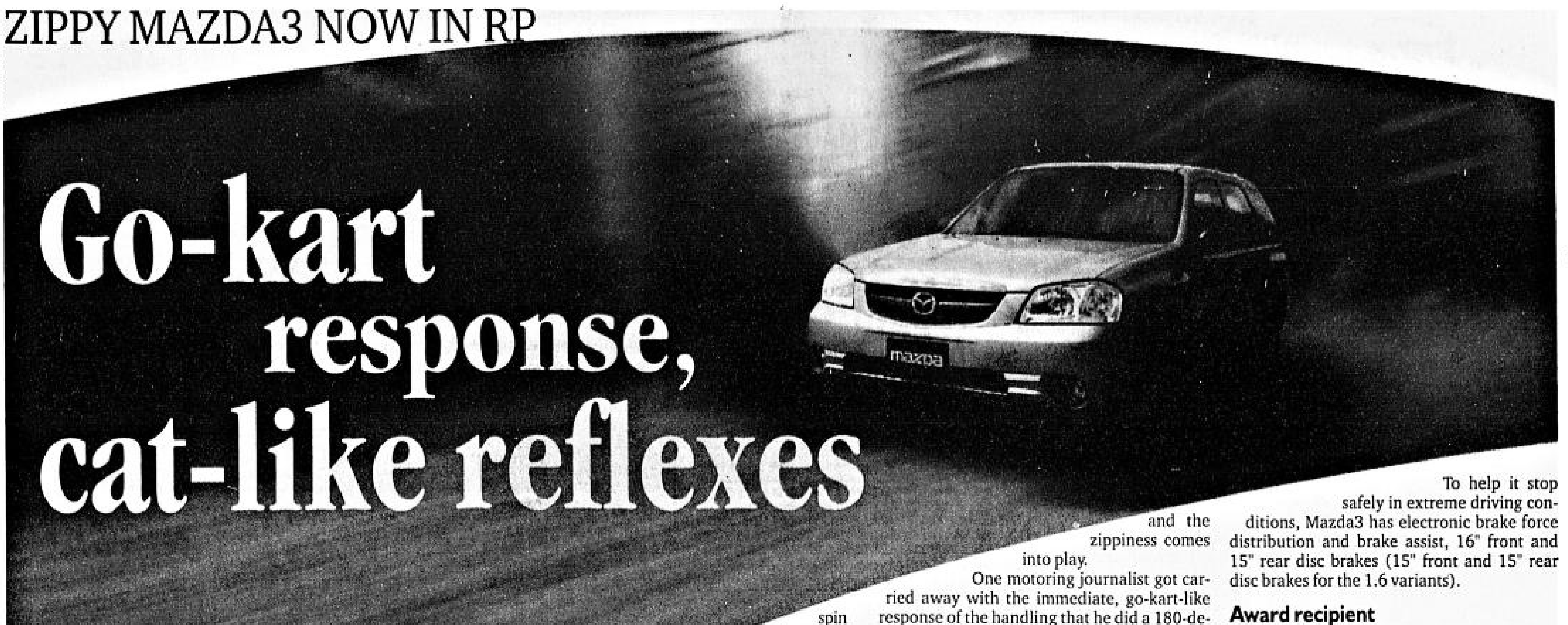
Go-kart response, cat-like reflexes



By Tessa R. Salazar

SHARK, eagle, lizard and cat. It isn't a kiddie card game. It isn't a show-and-tell in elementary class, either. So, why in heaven's name are we mentioning these four animals together?

The answer lies between all four wheels—Zoom-Zoom wheels, that is. The smaller version of the Mazda6 has just arrived. And like the golden snitch in Mr. Potter's game of Quidditch, it zipped and zoomed about quicker than the eye could see. Fortunately for us, we caught some Mazda3s lying idle and had first crack at them, and took them for a brief spin from Manila to Tagaytay Highlands and back.

Following its bigger sister Mazda6's footsteps, compact car Mazda3—which was launched recently in the country—displayed the surefootedness of a lizard, the keen senses of an eagle, and the agility of a cat. No matter the hardy animal you likened it to, Mazda3 surely had big hearts in its engine variants.

3 variants

Snaking through winding Tagaytay Highlands, the three automatic transmission variants—2.0L R , 1.6L·V and 1.6L S—displayed uncanny abilities in movement and stability. During extreme turns, minimal body rolls (or body lean) were felt, and no creaks were heard inside. We were all safe and sound inside the belly of the beast, as it were.

The 1.6-liter variant may have its quirks, though, as the acceleration may feel initially heavy and sluggish, especially after coming from driving the 2-liter. Once the tachometer hits 3,000 rpm, however, the "zoom" begins and the zippiness comes into play.

One motoring journalist got carried away with the immediate, go-kart-like response of the handling that he did a 180-degree handbrake turn on the 1.6L.

Its new generation MZR engines, its maker claimed, perform linear acceleration that matches the driver's accelerator-pedal inputs, resulting in immediate response of the car to accelerator pedal operations and abundant torque to secure powerful acceleration in demand. In short, the ride promises to be linear, lively and torquey: the perfect fun drive.

We tried on the four-speed Activematic transmission that gave us the option to drive automatic or manual.

Animal appeal

To add to its animal appeal, Mazda3 has a muscular exterior, looking like a cat ready to pounce, the effect aided by the sports-coupé proportions and a tilt-and-slide sunroof. For audio entertainment, it has 6-disc in-dash CD player with automatic level control, audio switches on the steering wheel, and six speakers all around. The two-liter variant rolls on 17" aluminum alloy wheels and 205/50R17 tires (the 1.6L V has 16" aluminum alloy and 205 55R16 tires, the 1.6L S 15" aluminum alloy and 195 65R15 tires), and has front fog lamps.

To help it stop safely in extreme driving conditions, Mazda3 has electronic brake force distribution and brake assist, 16" front and 15" rear disc brakes (15" front and 15" rear disc brakes for the 1.6 variants).

Award recipient

During the Aug. 11 formal launch Mazda director Dave Macasadia said Mazda3 has been the recipient of several awards worldwide: 11 in Europe, Canada and United States. Among its accolades have been the "best new economy car," "best new sports coupé or sedan," "car of the year" in Denmark, Turkey and the Czech Republic and the "most wanted sedan" in the States.

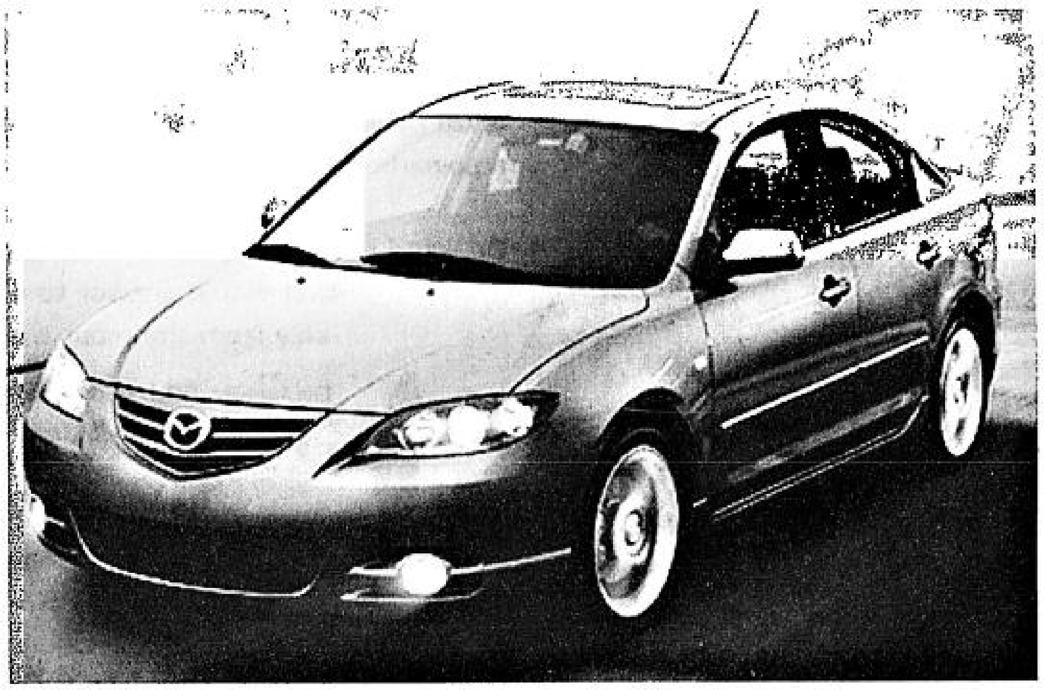
From 2003 to present, it has bagged 30 awards from Asia to the United States and Europe.

"We are thrilled to have the vehicle here in the Philippines. We have been saying that Mazda is all about 'zoom-zoom' and with the all-new Mazda3, consumers will surely rediscover the emotion of being in motion," said Mazda Philippines' Tonette Lee.

Mazda3's standard retail prices are P915,000 (2.0L R); P780,000 (1.6 V) and P719,000 (1.6-L S). These "animals" have a warranty from the "vet" of three years or 100,000 km.

In so short a time, Mazda3 put the smile back in our driving.

PETROL red



TECHNO gray

Ford Philippines expands CBU exports to 4th Asean market

FORD Motor Co. Philippines recently marked the ceremonial send-off of the first volume exports of Ford Escapes bound for Malaysia via simple rites at the Ford plant in Laguna with Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima as guest of honor.

Malaysia is the latest country to be added to the growing list of Ford's export markets, further expanding the company's reach in the Asean market and reinforcing its position as the country's only exporter of completely built-up (CBU) vehicles.

Since the launch of the Ford export program in 2002, Philippine-made Ford and Mazda vehicles such as the Ford Escape and Tierra, and Mazda Tribute and Protégé, have already been successfully exported to Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. A total of 21,000 units of completely built-up vehicles have been exported to date.

Expansion

The expansion of Ford's export initiative comes under the Asean Free Trade Agreement (Afta) program that supports a multilateral policy allowing the trading of vehicles at preferential tariffs within the region. By allowing the rationalization of manufacturing activities, the Afta has enabled Ford to relocate the assembly of models such as the Lynx and the Escape to the Philippines.

"The expansion of Ford's export program is solid proof that Ford vehicles produced in the Philippines are world-class and have passed the stringent standards, set by other countries in the Asean region," said Henry Co, president of Ford Group Philippines. "This is confirmed by the fact that the Ford Lynx we export to Thailand was named Car of the Year during the Bangkok Motorshow last year and the Ford Escape became the best-selling small SUV in the Thailand market two months in a row early this year," Co added.

In July 2003, the export program marked its first major milestone when Ford vehicles for export reached the 10,000th unit mark. In October 2003, Ford Motor chair and CEO Bill Ford announced an additional investment of $50 million to facilitate the expansion of the Ford Philippines plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where the vehicles are assembled.

Positive trade balance

Total exports for 2004 are expected to reach 16,000 vehicles and more than 100,000 vehicle units within the next five years.

With its export program, Ford remains to be the only car manufacturer in the Philippines with a positive trade balance. In 2003 alone, Ford Motor has cumulatively exported $450 million, while imports amounted to only $146 million. Contributing to this positive trade balance is the export of finished vehicles assembled at the local plant.

Moreover, the Ford export program contributes to the creation of jobs in the auto industry apart from pumping millions of dollars in revenue to the country's dollar reserves. To date, the export program has generated $300 million from Philippine-made Ford vehicles.

Ford Philippines assembles export units from its sprawling P4-billion, 30,000-square meter, ISO 9002- and ISO 14001-certified plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

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Tayag aims to keep winning streak as Ducati Cup resumes Aug. 21-22

DUCATI CUP 2004 points leader Rene Tayag appears to continue his perfect win streak when the series resumes on Aug. 21 and 22 at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

After dominating the first two legs of the motorbike series for Ducati enthusiasts, Tayag leads in the points standings with a perfect 40 from four races.

Threats

Renato Fernandez and Biboy Cometa are expected to threaten Tayag and put a stop to his winning ways.

Fernandez is second in the standings with 28 from two second and two third place finishes during the first two legs of the Ducati series organized by the Tuason Racing School.

Cometa is in third place with 21 points after coming in a very close second to Tayag in both races of the second leg.

Gap

During their last encounter, the gap between Tayag and Cometa at the finish of both races was less than two seconds

Ducati Cup is presented by Addict Mobile and co-sponsored by Petron, Brother's Burger, FHM, A-Toy Body Kits, Oakley, Gerry's Grill and Access Plus.

RENE Tayag (No. 8) is pressed hard by Biboy Cometa (No. 111) during the last leg of the Ducati Cup 2004 presented by Addict Mobile. The series resumes this weekend at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

SIMILAR FACES: Front chin spoiler, snub nose and V-shaped grille for the vivid blue Jazz and the nighthawk black City.

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

Jazz and the City

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

QUICK, what's the difference between the Honda City and the Honda Jazz?

The most obvious answer to that question, of course, is that the City is a notchback sedan with the trunk lid opening like any passenger car's, while the Jazz is a hatchback with a rear door opening upward like an SUV. Another less obvious difference is that the City is now available with a 1.5-liter VTEC powerplant while the Jazz has a 1.3-liter i-DSI (intelligent Dual and Sequential Ignition) engine. From May 2003 to June 2004, however, the City sold here only had a 1.3-liter i-DSI engine.

Otherwise, the similarities between the two subcompacts outnumber the differences. Except for the generous overhang of its rear end, the City's lines and profile resemble those of the Jazz. Viewed frontally, both cars present similar three-dimensional headlamps and the same built-in front chin spoiler, wedge-like façade, snub nose and V-shaped grille with the Honda badge at the center. The only difference is that the City's grille is adorned with chrome molding. On the 1.5 City and the Jazz, the radio antenna is front roof-mounted.

Sharing

The Jazz and the City share the same platform, the same suspension system (independent strut with lateral force-canceling springs and stabilizer up front, H-shaped torsion beam at the rear,) the same noise insulation technologies, the same Electric Power Steering (EPS) and the same unusual location for the fuel tank beneath the front seats. The unconventional fuel tank layout results in more room for the cabin and exceptional flexibility in seating arrangements and cargo space. Even with all seats in use, the City offers an impressive 500 liters of trunk space, more than some medium-size cars; while the Jazz with its 380-liter load volume can accommodate four big suitcases in upright position or three large golf bags piled on top of one another across the width of the trunk.

SNAZZY HATCHBACK: Some people prefer the Jazz's hatchback to the City's rear overhang.

And it gets better. The U.L.T.SEAT (Utility.Long.Tall Seat mode) feature in both cars creates up to 1.7 meters of space (in the Jazz) or 1.8 to 2.0 meters (in the City) in the Utility Mode; space of up to 2.6 meters (in the City) or 2.4 meters (in the Jazz) in the Long-Cargo Mode; and floor-to-ceiling space up to 1.2 meters high for tall cargo in the Tall Mode. Each configuration is achieved in three easy steps. In the 1.3 City, U.L.T SEAT is available only in the S trim.

Uniform cockpits

Inside, the cockpits of the two cars are almost uniform, with the same tilt-adjustable three-spoke urethane steering wheel, three separate and large meters with metallic frame, cobra-type AT shift lever with metallic shift lever console, large dial controller for the air-con, moquette seat fabric, chrome inner door handles and seatbelt shoulder adjuster for front occupants. Both have dual glove boxes, covered cup holders, a cell phone tray close to the power socket and small storage compartments.

But to me the best thing that the Jazz and the City share is CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission) with 7-speed Steermatic that allows the driver to manually shift up or down by pressing two buttons on the 9 and 3 positions of the steering wheel. The belt-driven CVT and 7-Speed Steermatic work flawlessly together with the compact, lightweight engine's generous torque at low and mid-range of the rpm to deliver smooth, sporty performance in overtaking maneuvers. The twin spark plugs and two valves per cylinder plus variable ignition timing ensure fuel efficiency and cleaner emissions.

On paper, the Jazz's 1.3-liter i-DSI engine's peak horsepower of 82 ps/5,700 rpm and 11.8 kg-m/2,800 max torque may appear unimpressive. Yet the performance of the Jazz feels more powerful compared to some 1.6-liter cars. On the Skyway, the Jazz hit 150 km/h, remaining comfortable and stable although the little engine got somewhat loud and noisy.

Balanced steering

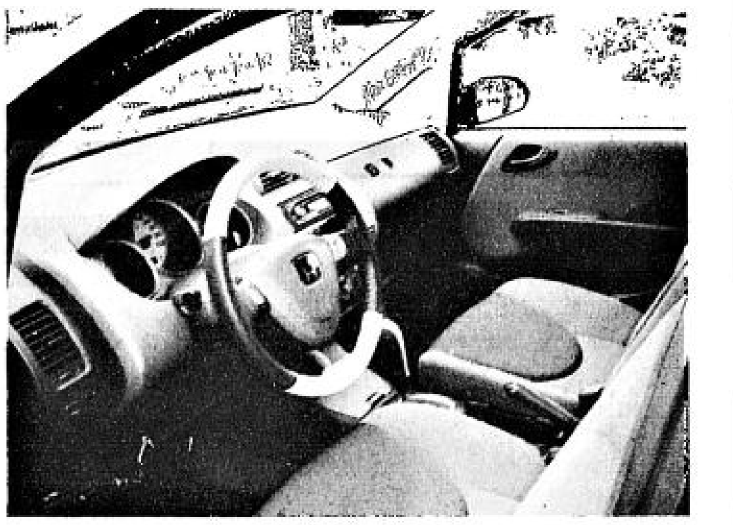
The 1.5-liter City's 16-valve VTEC powerplant, on the other hand, produces 110 ps/5,800 rpm max and 14.5 kg-m/4,800 torque. The VTEC City cruised at 160 km/h on the Skyway and seemed capable of 175 km/h. EPS in both the Jazz and the City efficiently balances the steering force between light at low speed and firm/heavy at high speed. Both handle corners superbly.

The Jazz and the City share the same safety features: G-Force. Control Technology (G-CON) that protects the passengers in case of a collision; dual SRS airbags, ABS, EBD, wave key, front pretensioner seatbelts with load limiters, neck shock mitigation seats and a body structure to lessen injuries to pedestrians in the event of an accident. Cross floor members surround the central fuel tank for more protection and improved body rigidity. However, some of these safety features (airbags and ABS) are options for the Jazz S and 1.5 City and not included in the Jazz A and the 1.3 City S and A models.

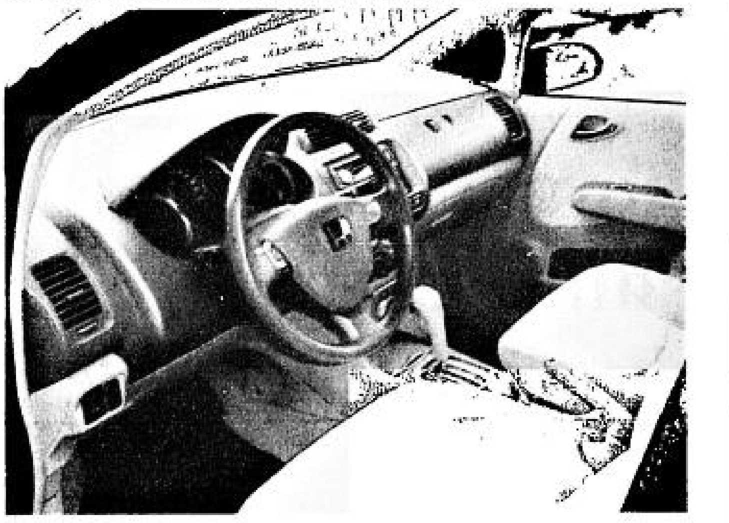
So, which of the Honda supermini twins would you choose if you were buying? If head-turning good looks is top priority, take the Jazz CVT (P690,000). If stronger engine performance is your mantra, buy the 1.5 City VTEC CVT (P699,000). Whether Jazz or the City, CVT is a must-have.

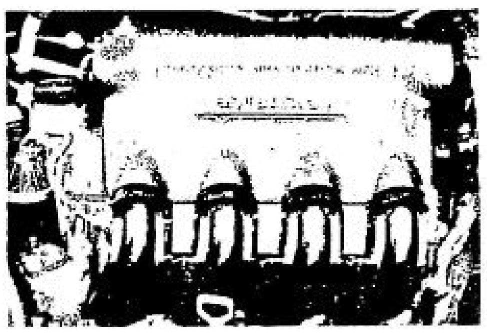
* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Mediocrity thrives on standardization.



UNIFORM COCKPITS: Only the two-tone colors are different, gray for the Jazz (above) and beige for the City (below).





WHAT the Jazz does not have: The City's 1.5-liter, 16-valve VTEC engine

LOOK-ALIKE: Except for the City's rear end (right photo), its lines and profile resemble those of the Jazz (above).

More prizes at stake in latest Isuzu promo

ISUZU Philippines Corp. continuously showers with unmatched gifts and high-quality prizes its valued Isuzu Crosswind customers with the ongoing promo dubbed "Loaded! The Isuzu Crosswind Win! Win! Win!" that will last up to Aug. 31.

A lot of exciting treats and winning opportunities await privileged Isuzu Crosswind buyers and even prospective clients who will partake in the promo. Walk-in customers who will visit and inquire within the promo period will instantly be given free Isuzu premium items and as soon as they make a reservation, more prizes await them as they pick-a-prize at their Isuzu dealership.

Adding more excitement, the buying customer of any Isuzu Crosswind variant (XUVi, XUV, XTRM, XT, XL)—individual, corporate and government accounts whether outright cash payment or financing—automatically receives a Carryboy 3-Way Lock System. Also, every purchase is an opportunity to win the following prizes: 5 JVC Plasma TVs, 6 Shinco Portable DVD Players, 7 Sony 40" Projection TVS, 7 Pioneer Home Theatre Systems, 8 Panasonic Video Cameras, 8 Play Station 2, 10 Canon (A80) Digital Cameras, 7 I-Pod MP3 Players and 8 sets of Carryboy Massagers.

To top it all is the much-coveted chance of being an Isuzu Trooper owner since the Trooper is the major prize in the grand raffle draw.

Deadline for submission of entries for the grand raffle draw is on Aug. 31. Drawing of winners is scheduled on Sept. 10 at Isuzu Pasig with IPC officials and a DTI representative.

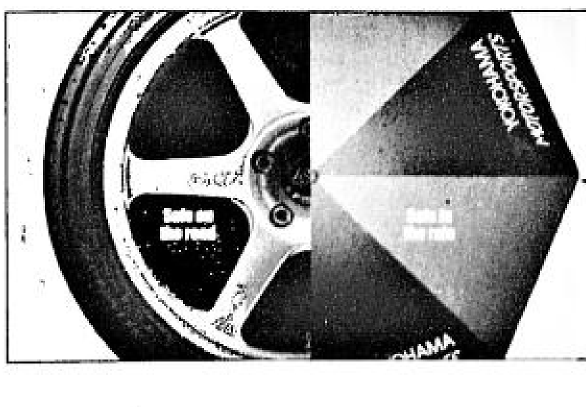
In Metro Manila, Isuzu dealerships can be found at Edsa Balintawak, on Quezon Avenueb and Commonwealth, and in Pasig, Manila, Makati and Alabang. In the provinces, Isuzu dealerships are located in Isabela, Pangasinan, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, San Pablo, Bacolod, Mandaue, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

GASFAR
fuel saving tips

CHECK AND CLEAN SPARK PLUGS

Make it a habit to check on your spark plugs periodically. Clean plugs assure you of better combustion and less unburned gas.

A public service message of:
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM
and the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



FREE UMBRELLAS FROM YOKOHAMA!

Get your umbrella with every purchase of 2 passenger car tires or 2 light truck radial tires. Also, a free high performance golf umbrella comes with every purchase of 2 high performance tires.

Promo period is from August 1 to September 30, 2004.

Watch out for the final race on Dec. 4-5, 2004.

Know It. Ride It.
YOKOHAMA
www.yokohamatire-asia.com

Yokohama supports the Asian Formula Three racing events.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3724 Series of 2004.

OPTRA 1.8 NOW IN RP

Oh, the difference 0.2 liters make

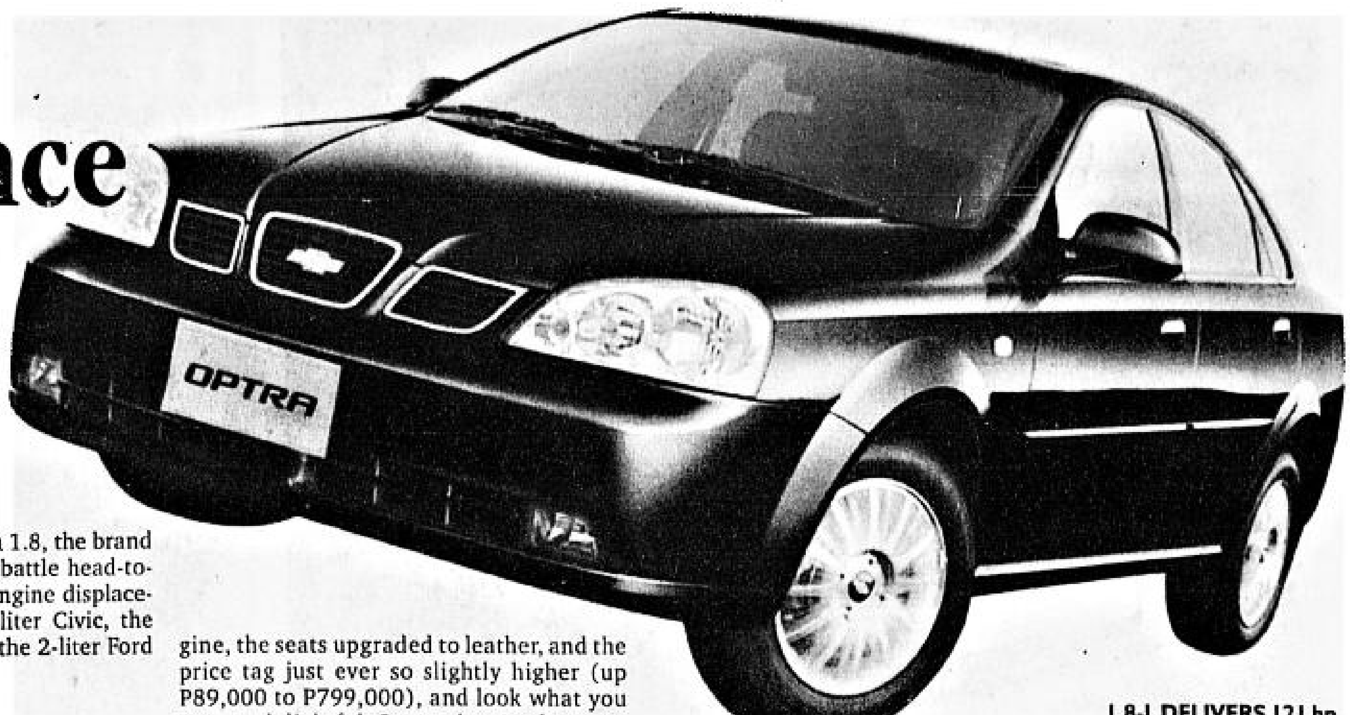
By Tessa R. Salazar

THE CHEVY Optra 1.6-liter is now the third most sought-after sedan in the mid-sized passenger car category. With the entry of the 1.8-liter variant, manufacturers as well as dealers are probably hoping they can improve on this sales standing with a fifth of a liter added to the engine, and maybe catch up with erstwhile second placer Honda Civic.

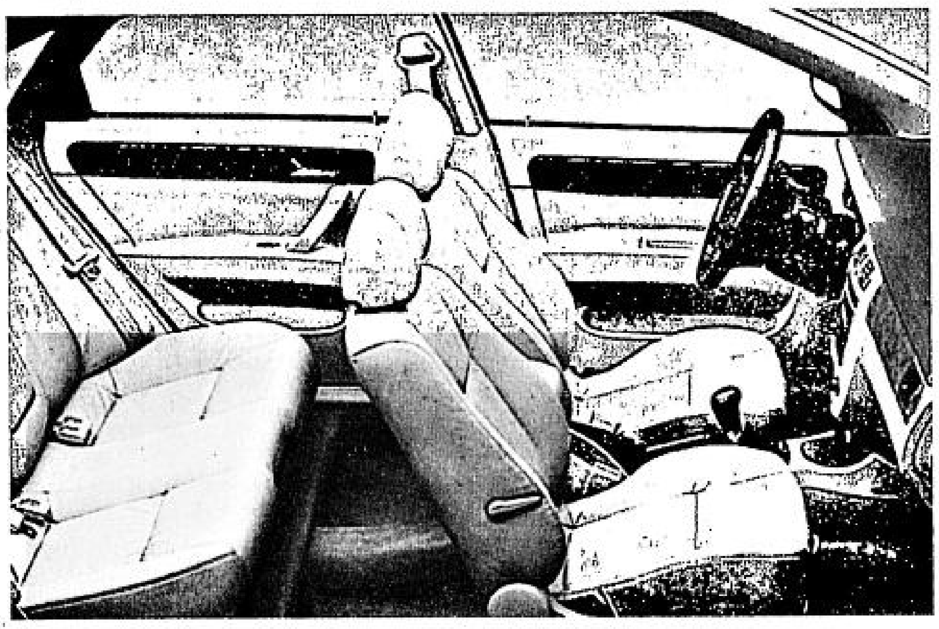
With the entry of the Optra 1.8, the brand is now seen as more able to battle head-to-head with the other higher engine displacement sedans such as the 2-liter Civic, the Toyota Corolla Altis 1.8 and the 2-liter Ford RS Lynx.

Sales pitch

The sales pitch down at the Chevy store is this: The body of the Optra 1.6 transplanted with a more powerful 1.8-L engine, the seats upgraded to leather, and the price tag just ever so slightly higher (up P89,000 to P799,000), and look what you get—a delightful Optra that packs more power to the punch.



1.8-L DELIVERS 121 hp



LEATHER seats and polished woodgrain panels

Oh, but what a difference the time makes. A year ago, General Motors Automobiles Philippines brought some Filipino motoring journalists to Pattaya in Thailand to test both the 1.8 and the 1.6 variants. This writer immediately liked the 1.8 and waited, and waited, and waited, for that sedan to follow her home in the Philippines.

Now that it's finally here (stress on the word "finally"), this writer is worried that competition has had too long a head start. And so with our earlier prediction of the 1.8-liter Optra as a "Corolla killer," hold that thought for another year, folks.

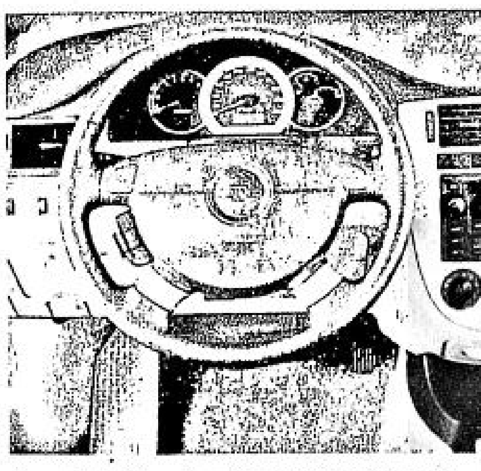
Expected market share

The General Motors Automobiles Philippines sales and marketing director Nicky Mariano said he is hoping for a respectable market share—about 20 percent of the total volume within the 1.8- to 2-liter engine.

One feature the Optra 1.8L brags about is its design made by famed Italian design house Pininfarina—the same one that has designed Ferrari models.

It has an automatic four-speed transmission. And it boasts of comprehensive noise and vibration reduction system equipped with materials for sound deadening and special engine mounts.

At P799,000, three-year or 100,000-km warranty and free-periodic maintenance good for two years or 30,000 km (whichever comes first), the bigger Optra could go a long way.



ROOMY cabin space with Blaupunkt Audio System (5-disc in-dash CD changer)

Toyota celebrates anniversary with Previa, RAV4 raffle

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp., on its 16th year in the country, announces the extension of the Toyota Buy One, Win One raffle and financing promo.

The stakes have now become bigger and better with Toyota giving away two units of its compact SUV model RAV4 4x4 and two units of its premium minivan model Previa as grand prizes for the raffle.

Financing deals

Toyota will also continue the special promo financing deals for the Revo and both RAV4 4x4 and 4x2 models. Low down payment, low monthly amortization schemes and zero-interest plans are being offered until the end of the month for the promo. Toyota Motor Philippines is observing its 16th year of operation in the country this month.

This is the first time in many years that TMP is giving away as grand prizes two of its most prestigious and popular models from its Mobile Lifestyle vehicle line—the Previa and the RAV4 4x4. What makes the announcement more special is it coincides with the manufacturer's 16th anniversary in the country. Toyota's extension of the promo with the additional vehicle prizes is its gesture of appreciation for its customers in making it the No. 1 automotive company in the country.

Raffle coupons

All Toyota buyers for August will receive raffle coupons, which qualify them for the raffle draw. Each Toyota model has a corresponding number of raffle entries with the top-of-the-line SUV model Prado, for instance, receiving eight raffle coupons equivalent to eight chances of winning as well.

All customers can also avail of the financial packages offered by Toyota's financial arm, the Toyota Financial Services. TFS heightens the excitement of the Buy One, Win One promo by offering an attractive financing scheme for the RAV4 4X4, 4x2 and Revo. All three vehicles are made available for a generous low down payment of P100,000.

Other financing options

TFS also offers other financing options for the budget-conscious.

This top-of-the-line Revo boasts of entertainment features like its DVD/VCD player with LCD monitors for a comfortable driving adventure for the whole family. The gas-fed DLX priced at P663,000, becomes even more affordable with the same financing scheme, giving customers only P7,291 to pay monthly for 60 months if they purchase it at 50 percent down payment.

Toyota invites all its customers to visit their showrooms and take part in its special promotion this month. Customers will also be treated to a host of other special value packages being offered by its dealers. Apart from the sales promo, Toyota owners can also avail of the latest service packages and the various vehicle accessories available for them.

'Get Refreshed' at Shell retail stations

DO you want to refresh yourself with a spa treatment? Or how about refreshing your engine with a Helix Plus oil change package? Get a chance to do these for free by simply joining the Shell "Get Refreshed" raffle promo.

Just visit any of the participating Shell Helix Service Centers and service bays until Sept. 30, get a "Refreshing Oil Change Experience" and join the raffle. Upon purchase of a Helix Oil change package (consisting of minimum 4-liter Shell Helix motor oil and oil filter plus labor), customers will get a corresponding number of raffle coupons based on the oil used. Oil change package using Helix Ultra entitles customers to three raffle tickets, Helix Plus to two raffle tickets, and Helix Super or Super Diesel to one raffle ticket. On top of the raffle, customers can expect a "Refreshing Oil Change Experience" when they avail of the oil change service.

Up for grabs in the raffle are 200 "Refresh" certificates, 100 of which are "Refresh yourself" spa gift certificates and the rest are 100 "Refresh your engine" Helix Plus oil change package gift certificates.

CHEVY Trailblazer EXT

Chevy keen on leaving behind other SUVs

By Tessa R. Salazar

IF IT'S strong enough for the Americans, imagine what it can do here.

Direct from the US of A, the Chevy Trailblazer EXT hauls its way to the Philippines with an unusually strong pulling package of 275 horsepower generated by a retro-looking straight six engine. Positioning itself against SUVs like the Mitsubishi Pajero, Toyota Prado and Isuzu Trooper, the Trailblazer looks dead set on playing a tug-of-war game against the more established SUVs combined.

Rave reviews

It has already earned rave reviews in its country of origin, with some even saying the Trailblazer besting the Ford Explorer V-8 in almost all departments—except in fuel mileage.

The Trailblazer ranges itself with the likes of the Dodge Durango—somewhere between a compact SUV and massive Tahoe. Reviews abroad indicate (we haven't had the chance to test-drive one as of yet) that the Trailblazer has the specs of a truck but rides like a Chevy Venture.

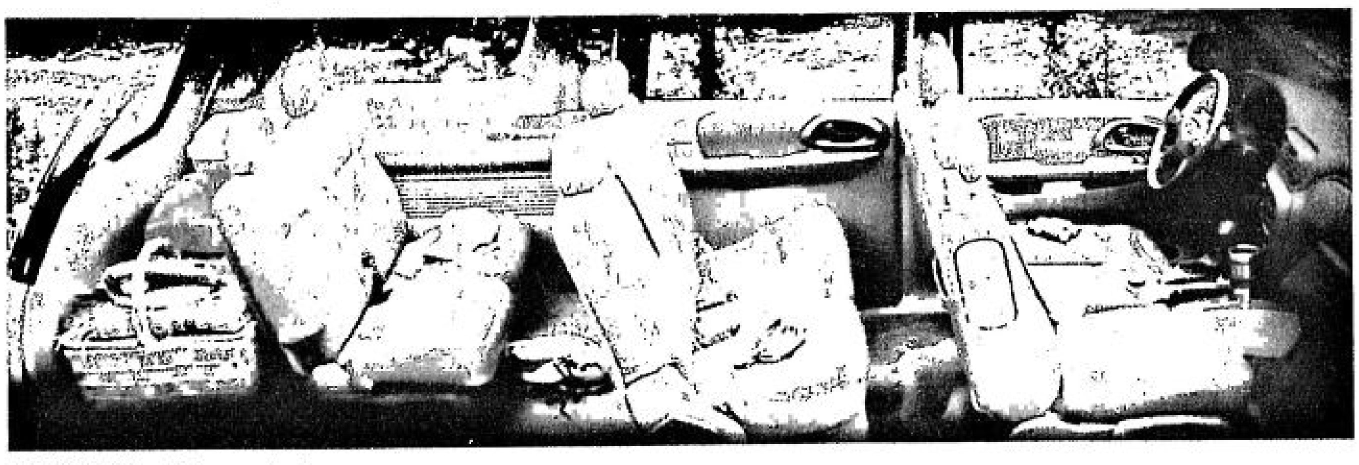
FOLD the seat and you get a nearly flat load floor with 107 cu feet

Lifestyle vehicle

With the power of 275 horses and the ride comfort of a Venture, we surmise that the Trailblazer will carry an image of a lifestyle vehicle with a four-wheel-drive capacity that won't do much work here in the Philippines as it does in the States. With that, GMAP people insist that the Trailblazer, unlike what auto reviewers have said, will actually be considerably fuel-efficient. They cite highway driving consumption to 7 km to a liter, which, they say, would be "very good" in Philippine standards.

Quite interestingly, the Trailblazer features a travel load recorder for forgetful owners. If you want to be reminded of a chore that needs to be done—like you need to gas up or buy groceries—this vehicle will remind you somehow.

Its engine delivers 275 hp at 6,000 rpm and 275 lb ft of torque at 3,600 rpm and is equipped with independent front suspension coil over shock design with upper and lower control arms and 5-link design with coil springs. The Trailblazer's introductory price is P1.995 million.



A LIFESTYLE vehicle cum hauler

A design concept that defies constant change

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

SIX years have passed since Dodge launched the original Durango.

Back then it was a huge success in part because it had killer features for its class: the sport utility vehicle sits in the middle of the pack with its neither too big nor too small frame, it had a powerful V8 engine under the hood and to better fit growing families, it offered a third-row seat.

While its competition underwent several style transformations, the original Durango's remained intact for several years (with only minor exterior and interior changes) before it was totally redesigned for its 2004 edition.

Unique styling

"It's unique styling bred many loyal fans worldwide and here in the Philippines the original Durango still elicit lots of second glances," shares Porti Vencer, national marketing director of Norkis Automotive Resources Corp., Dodge brand distributor (as well as Chrysler and Cherokee) in the Philippines.

Built from the same basic architecture as the Dodge Dakota pickup, the original Durango filled a profitable gap in the SUV market by striking a balance between the heavy-duty loads and cargo space of a big truck, and the parkability and handling of a small truck.

This combination of singular attributes, and distinctive styling, helped the original Durango sell close to 200,000 units in its peak year in 1999.

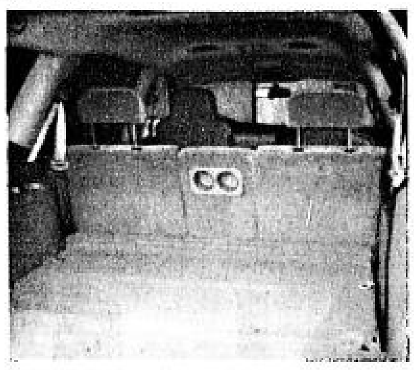
"This is the perfect choice for the buyer who wants a little bit more of everything in a compact SUV," describes Vencer.

Endearing exterior design

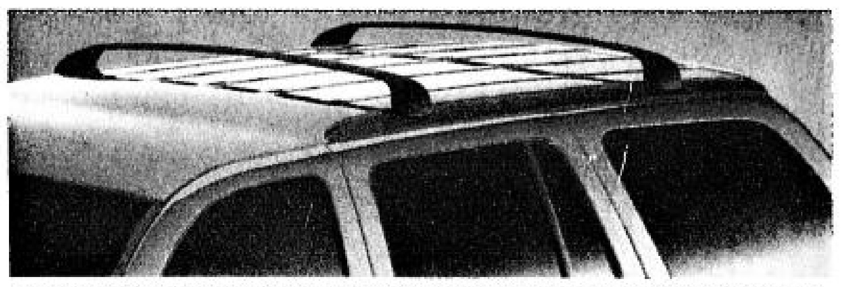
The original Durango took its styling cues from the Dakota and Ram pickups with its familiar cross-hair grille and aggressive stance.

Starting from a Dakota-based design study, designers and engineers made changes only to provide a third seat that accommodates full-size adults—increasing the wheelbase to 2.946 meters, increasing the rear overhang to about 25 to 38 mm and raising the roof to a similar measurement from the second seat back to increase passenger headroom and visibility.

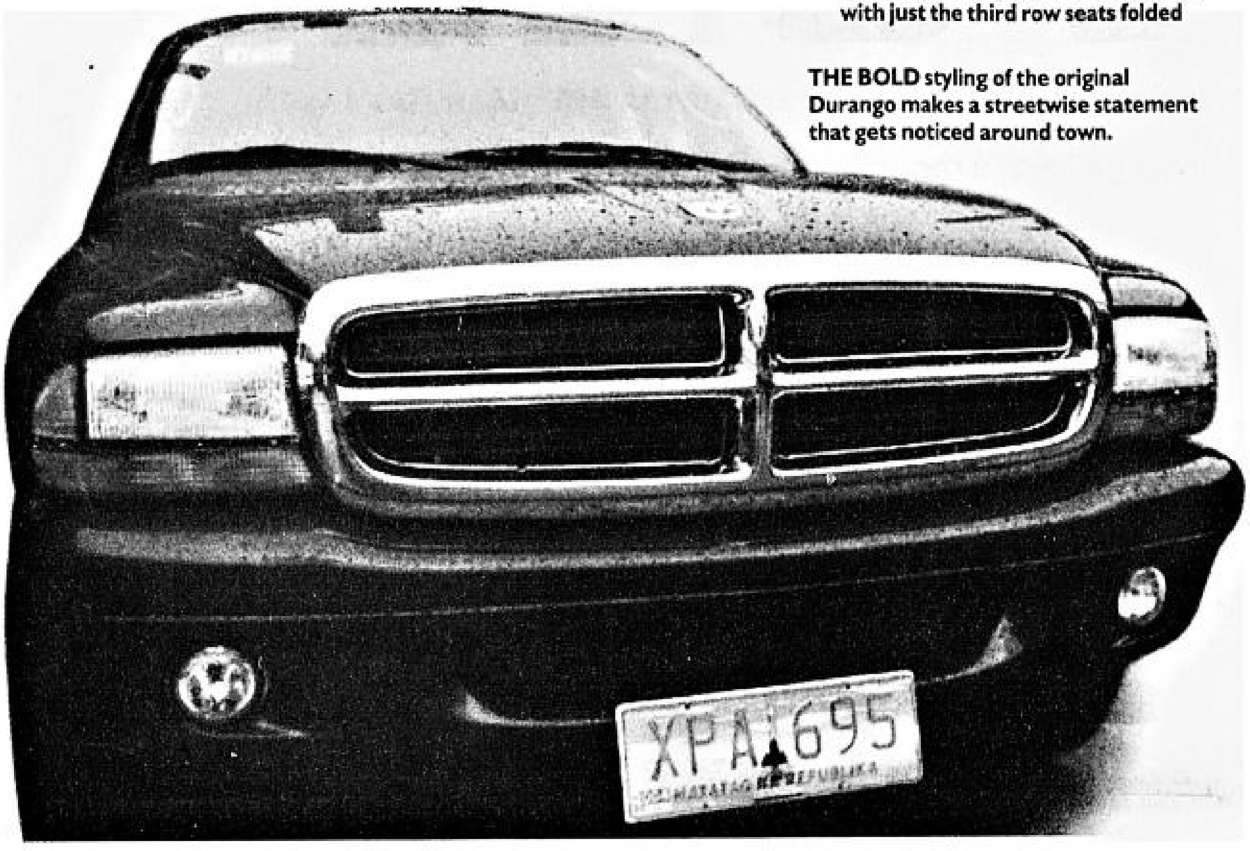
ENJOY worry-free driving, thanks to an overhead console that reminds when to gas up.



THERE is already ample cargo space with just the third row seats folded



THE ORIGINAL Durango's raised roof is conspicuously hidden by integral roof rack.



THE BOLD styling of the original Durango makes a streetwise statement that gets noticed around town.

Says Vencer: "You will not notice that the roof is raised on the outside, but you sure know it is on the inside. This additional height is conspicuously hidden by the integral roof rack, designed to provide a consistent visual line from the front to the rear of the vehicle. The roof rack also serves to carry a substantial load, thus, achieving its design and a functional purpose."

The rear air-conditioning unit was also mounted at the front of the raised area, which means, no headroom was taken away and a direct flow of air was created for the second- and third-row passengers.

Flexible rear seats

The rear seats not only serve as a comfortable area for passengers as it can be repositioned as a flat load floor.

"This uniquely designed second row seats fold and tumble forward, provide easy third-row access for passengers. To increase storage capacity, the third row folds in conjunction with the second row to form a flat surface from the tailgate to the front seats," Vencer explains.

This means, when the second and third rows were laid flat, it can offer 2,492 liters of cargo space—plenty of room for gears, lumber and even home appliances that need transporting.

If the cargo won't fit inside, Dodge designers and engineers made sure the mid-size SUV can at least tow them so they gave the original Durango a maximum towing capacity rated at 3,311 kg that matches that of some full-size SUVs.

Overhead console

Another endearing interior element inside the original Durango is the overhead console that includes a microprocessor-controlled mini trip computer with compass and temperature functions.

"The overhead console functions include an eight-point compass, ambient temperature, trip odometer, trip average fuel economy, fuel tank capacity (distance left to empty), which are all operated by two pushbuttons," reveals Vencer.

Another comfort for the driver are the switches mounted on the driver's door. There's a joystick that positions the power mirrors, as well as controls for all windows.

A pushbutton master switch allows the driver to lock out the other window switches, while the driver's switches remain operational.

Also available for the comfort of the driver is a six-way power seat track. Three switches on the seat's side control movement. A lever with four-way action controls vertical and horizontal action. Two paddle switches control cushion angle by raising and lowering it at the front or rear.

4.7-liter engine

Built in Newark, Delaware, the hallmark of the original Durango is its strong engine.

The one available here in the Philippines is the SLT 4x2 model (priced at P2.050 million), which features a 4.7-liter (single overhead camshaft and sequential multiport injection) Next Generation Magnum V-8.

Mated to a four-speed automatic transmission, this smooth and powerful engine can deliver 238.3 PS of power and 40.8 kg-m of torque.

"The designers and engineers wanted the original Durango to be functional in two aspects: as a people-mover and a load carrier. This means, it should be comfortable enough to provide its occupants sedan-like accommodation and at the same time rugged enough for hauling. I believe the original Durango has achieved these requirements that make it so endearing to buyers despite the emergence of newer models from competitors," Vencer concludes.

A hidden treasure named Outlander

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

ARLAN Reyes is the quietest guy I know from Mitsubishi, but one that Mel Dizon has so much respect that he has reposed in the kid such a gigantic job this early in his career: dealing with motoring journalists.

At the start, you find Arlan a bit strange because he rarely opens his mouth. He just keeps on smiling, never saying a word when you talk of things even those close to Mitsubishi affairs. Seemingly, he becomes animated only when talk strays into Ateneo.

You can't blame him. Like Ford's Sunny Medalla, Arlan is also a true-blue Atenean. And get this, Arlan and Sunny are schoolmates at Ateneo—from grade school to college. No wonder they are both assets in the companies they work with. Ateneo graduates, why they always excel in any arena you want them to be.

* * *

Arlan and I had the occasion again to renew ties some time ago through the Mitsubishi Outlander, a beautifully crafted compact SUV that has stunned me no end during the short period that I had it with me.

"Try it, Sir," said Arlan. "I know you will find something interesting in it."

He was right. This one has disarmed me completely.

* * *

Frankly, I never thought the Outlander was that good. Pound for pound, it should give its rivals a run for their money. I know that RAV4 is still No. 1 and breathing down closely on its neck is the Nissan X-Trail. But the Outlander? Why I wouldn't be surprised if it should crowd the leaders sooner or later. This is a vehicle that has traits not yet fully discovered by even the most discriminating vehicle enthusiasts in the country.

And you know what? Even before the full potential of the Outlander is finally uncovered, Mitsubishi will yet unleash a new Outlander shortly.

"It will still have the 2.4 engine, but this time, it will be a different type, so powerful you will not believe it's a 2.4-liter engine," said Arlan, smiling as usual from ear to ear.

* * *

Everything is so good with the present Outlander that I found no minor features in it; all major, you know. Its pulling power and hellish speed on the expressway being unquestionably strong, you next go to its looks. Why, from "head to foot," it's handsome.

Consider the following:

Genuine leather seat. Invecs II sportronic. Dual SRS airbags. 4G64 2.4L SOHC/16-valve multi-point injection. Leather-wrapped steering wheel/1-DIN single in-dash CD player. 16" aluminum wheels with 215/60 R16 tires. Fog lamps. Rear seat armrest with cup-holder. Retractable head lamp washer/clear lens rear tailings. Roof rails. Rear spoiler with 3rd brake LED-lamp and rear wiper and washer. Door scuff plates. Its maximum power (PS/rpm) is 136/5,000. Its maximum torque (kg-m/rpm is 21/2,500. And, to top it all, a three-year/100,000-km warranty. For only P1.270 million, you get all that.

Some discount, you say?

Let's ask Arlan about that. And then hope that he opens his mouth.

* * *

The new ticketing system from the MMDA will do away with the confiscation of our licenses during a traffic incident. It's telling us that after an apprehension, a ticket will be issued us containing the fine. We will pay the fine within seven days in any of the 583 Metro Bank branches in the metropolis. If not, more fines will be added to the original fine.

I find it hard to buy that. In the first place, some jeepney and bus operators are questioning the validity of the new scheme, arguing that there was not enough dialogue between them and the MMDA before this new system was adopted.

I have lost interest, if not hope, in the MMDA becoming a good government arm in implementing sound rules about traffic situations in the big city.

* * *

Look, at the start, the U-Turn slots looked good. But when the MMDA started tearing down islands dividing main thoroughfares in the city to give way for more U-Turn slots, what began as a really commendable traffic project would soon turn into a monster. Everywhere you go now, you see U-Turn slots. They have now become more of a traffic hazard than as tools to ease jams in the city.

We fall in line in long queues just to negotiate a length not even two yards long.

We suffer under the weight of the volume of vehicles making the U-Turn at said slots. This was not the case before, when there was but a few of them. In short, its purpose has been defeated. As I said, only in wide roads—such as Edsa and Commonwealth—that U-Turn slots be built.

* * *

Anyway, to go back to the new ticketing system of the MMDA.

Why Metro Bank was chosen as the only bank for us to pay the fine, the MMDA said Metro Bank won in the bidding "because it had the least cost on our part."

The operators said they could only contest the apprehension after having paid the fine, a claim the MMDA had denied. The MMDA said the aggrieved party has three days to contest the apprehension.

Which is which, the public is confused. I suggest GMA suspends the MMDA project and have it further studied.

* * *

My condolences to the loved ones of Flora Medina Soriquez, who passed away on Aug. 15 at the age of 86. One of the deceased's six children is DPWH Secretary Soriquez. She was married to Francisco Mendoza Soriquez, who was DPWH's former director of the bureau of maintenance. Her remains lie at Funeraria Nacional on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be announced later.

* * *

QUOTE ME. The rains impair your vision while driving. Make it a habit to slow down, especially when negotiating curves.

Mitsubishi introduces amazingly affordable easy own plans

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines launched its Amazingly Affordable Easy Own plans which features lowest down payment plan, very low interest rates on monthly payments, extended payment terms up to 72 months and additional discounts for low downpayment plans.

This financing promo offer makes it even easier to drive home the Mitsubishi Lancer, Adventure, Space Gear or Strada 4x4 automatic models.

Low down-payment plans

For instance, the new Lancer 1.6 GLX can be availed for as low as P64,700 down payment only. With this down payment, buyers can extend payments up to 72 months and pay monthly installments of P13,294. True enough this plan gets you the best value for your money, as the Lancer GLX features a spirited 1.6-liter engine, 4-wheel disc brakes, driver SRS airbag, 15-inch wheels, single in-dash CD stereo, plus keyless and alarm system.

Accordingly, Adventure models such as the Adventure GLX diesel can be acquired for just P58,000 down payment then pay only 14,094 monthly installments up to 72 months. Moreover, buyers who avail of the low down-payment plans for Lancer and Adventure will get additional P10,000 discount which they can apply for comprehensive insurance and/or accessories.

For the Strada 4x4 automatic pickup and Spacegear standard automatic van models, down payments are only as low as P150,000 and P87,000, respectively. Zero-interest plans are also available for the standard Spacegear van for as long as two whole years with a just 35 percent down payment.

Combination

Mitsubishi's easy own plans also features a combination of low down payment and low monthly payment plan. Under this financing plan, you only have to pay P7,590 for 72 months if you pay P329,000 down payment for the Lancer 1.6 GLX. A P333,000 down payment on the Adventure GLX diesel will only entail P8,047 monthly installments for 72 months.

Cash buyers, meanwhile, get special deals on insurance or choose from a wide range of dealer optional accessories for the vehicle of choice.

The Mitsubishi Amazingly Affordable Easy Own Plans is available at all Mitsubishi dealers nationwide until Aug. 31.

MITSUBISHI
Adventure

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until August 31, 2004*
Double the prizes.
Double your chances of winning!
GRAND RAFFLE DRAW IS ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2004*

- Promo is valid for participating Toyota Vehicle Purchases until August 31, 2004*
- Avail of FREE parts and services up to 10,000 kms. for the REVO and RAV4 through Toyota Financial Services special financing schemes*
- Purchases through Toyota Financial Services have more chances of winning

* As approved by DTI-NCR.

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RAV4
PREVIA

For areas covered by Toyota Financial Services

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FOR A TOYOTA, GO TO TOYOTA.

SPECIAL FINANCING SCHEMES FOR AS LOW AS ₱100,000 FOR THE RAV4 OR REVO!

- The REVO (all variants) and RAV4 can be purchased through attractive financing schemes through Toyota Financial Services.
- ***Downpayment for as low as ₱100,000 for all variants.***
- Low monthly payments for the REVO DLX Gas at P7,291 at 50% downpayment at 60 months.
- Low monthly payments for the RAV4 4x4 A/T at P14,352 at 50% downpayment at 60 months.
- Now available, RAV4 4x2: Low monthly payments for the RAV4 4x2 M/T at P11,651 at 50% downpayment at 60 months.**
- Buyers who participate in this financing promotion will have more chances of winning in the raffle promotion.

REVO

VARIANT	SRP	LOW DP	12	18	24	36	48	60
REVO VX 2.0 GAS A/T	939,000	100,000	72,751	50,109	39,811	28,541	23,287	19,972
SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	68,862	47,430	37,684	27,016	22,043	18,905
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	64,430	44,378	35,261	25,279	20,626	17,688
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	100,000	60,812	41,886	33,283	23,861	19,469	16,695
GL GAS	698,000	100,000	50,953	35,095	27,893	19,997	16,316	13,988
DLX GAS (15.08%dp)	663,000	100,000	47,788	32,915	26,162	18,756	15,303	13,119
DLX GAS (50%dp)	663,000	331,500	27,625	18,465	14,684	10,518	8,575	7,291
DLX DSL	690,000	100,000	50,230	34,597	27,497	19,713	16,084	13,789

RAV 4

VARIANT	SRP	DP	12	18	24	36	48	60
RAV4 4x4 (8.08%DP)	1,238,000	100,000	99,795	68,736	54,597	39,141	31,936	27,396
RAV4 4x4 (50%dp)	1,238,000	619,000	52,797	36,348	28,874	20,682	16,862	14,352
RAV4 4x2 (9.82%dp)**	1,018,000	100,000	79,897	55,031	43,718	31,342	25,572	21,934
RAV4 4x2 (50%dp)**	1,018,000	509,000	42,858	29,506	23,445	16,793	13,691	11,651

HERE'S HOW TO JOIN THE RAFFLE:

- For every purchase of any Toyota vehicle*, buyers would get the corresponding number of raffle coupons depending on the model purchased.
- Buyers should fill up the coupon with his/her name, address, age, telephone number, mobile number, model purchased, Sales Invoice Number, dealer outlet and affix their signature.
- Buyers may drop their coupons at the Toyota Dealer where they purchased the vehicle.
- Grand Raffle Draw is on September 6, 2004 at the Toyota Motor Philippines' Head Office at 31/F, GT Tower, Ayala Avenue corner Salcedo Sts., Makati City.
- See posters for details.

* *Except Corolla XL and Hilux DLX variants.*
** *As approved by DTI-NCR.*

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LIFESTYLE

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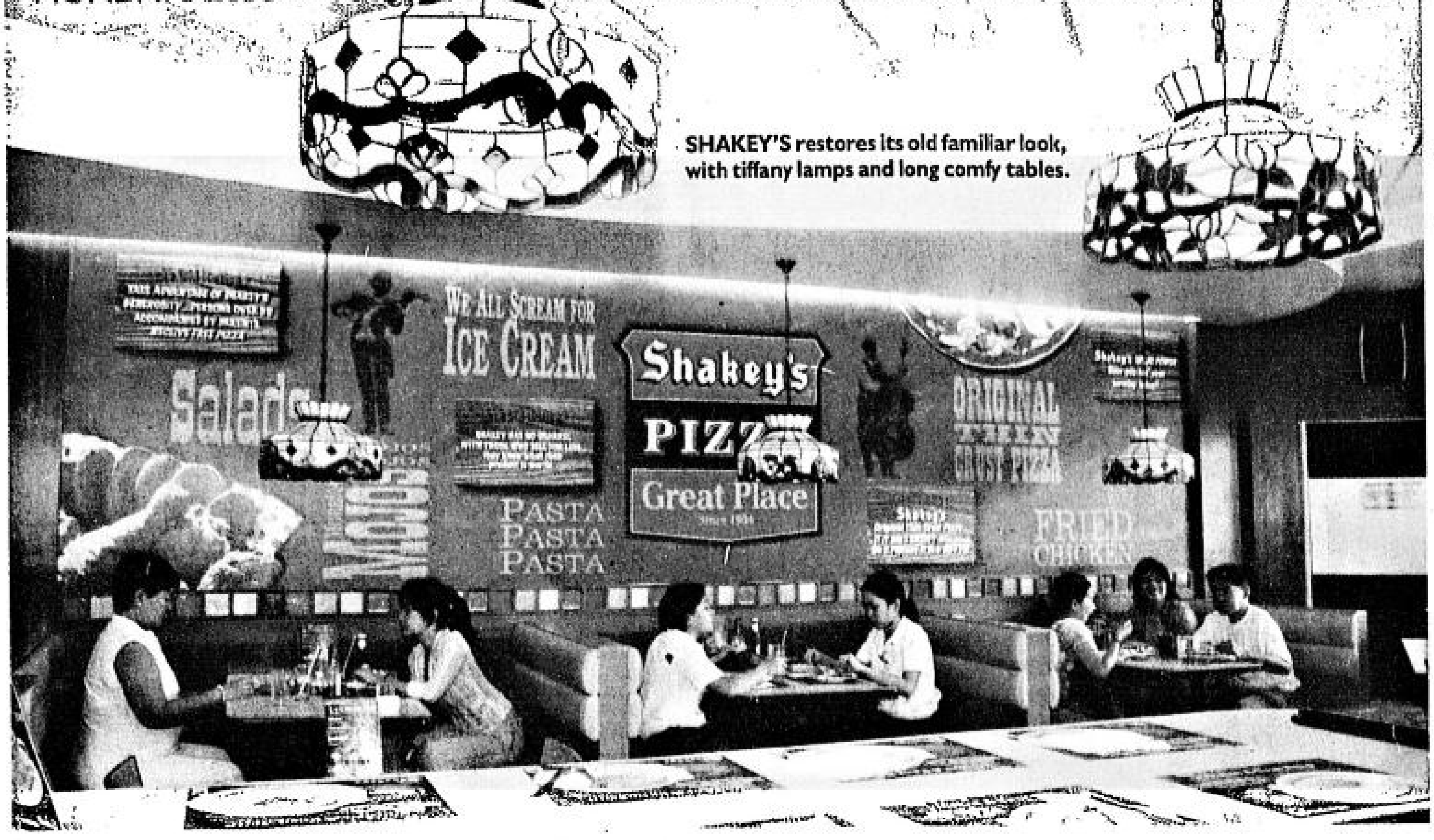
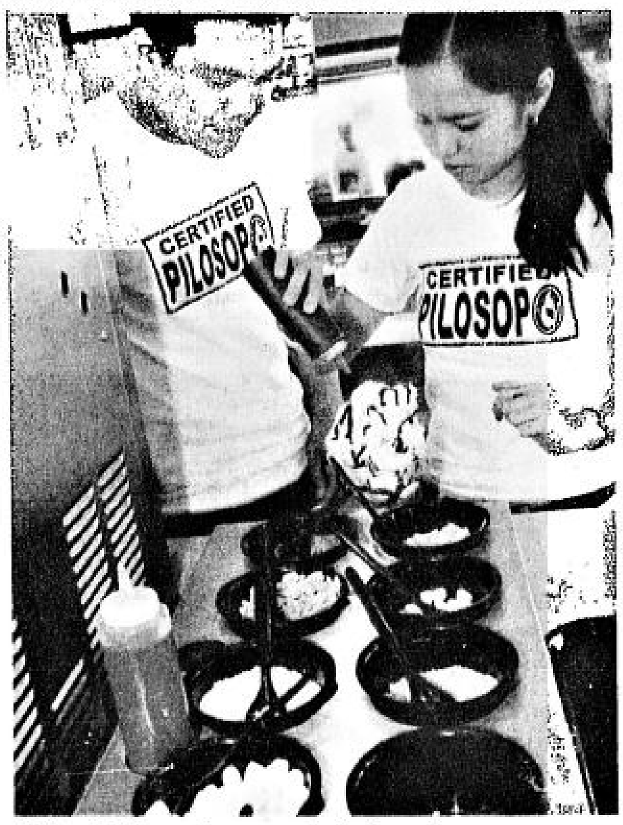
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

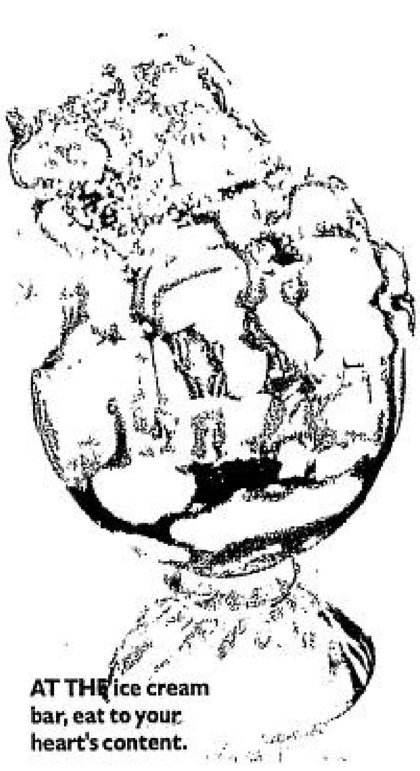


SHAKEY'S restores its old familiar look, with tiffany lamps and long comfy tables.



FOR only P85, guests can create their own ice cream masterpieces with a variety of toppings, such as chocolate bits, candy sprinkles, corn flakes, nuts, pineapple or marshmallows.

SHAKEY'S is the place to be if you're crazy about pizza.



AT THE ice cream bar, eat to your heart's content.

Good old days are back

Loyal patrons will be pleased to see the old Shakey's look and savor new offerings

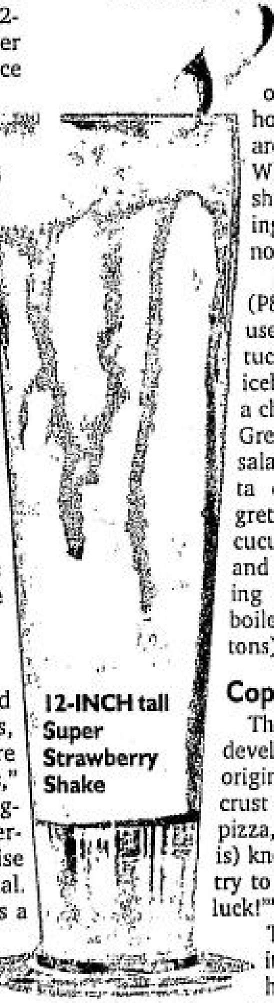
Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by August de la Cruz

NEED reasons to visit Shakey's these days?

How about these: create-your-own-ice cream masterpiece with as much topping as you want for only P85, 12-inch tall super thick shakes, crispier and tastier thin-crust Manager's Choice pizza cooked in a traditional brick oven, more meat and vegetable toppings for all-time favorites at no added cost, a variety of salads with garden fresh Romaine lettuce, less greasy and lip-smacking *mojos*, and best-value Super Platter that consists of pizza slices, chicken, *mojos*, salad and spaghetti.

A makeover has also made Shakey's a more homey, family-oriented pizza place.

Yes, the country's oldest pizza chain has come a long way in its 29 years in the food business. In almost three decades, Shakey's has launched exciting new products to attract more guests, and consistently improved its all-time favorite dishes to give loyal customers more value for their money.



12-INCH tall Super Strawberry Shake

Bigger is better

While in other restaurants reduced prices mean smaller portions, Shakey's does the opposite. "We're shying away from small portions," says Vicente Gregorio, general manager of International Family Food Services Inc., the Philippine franchise holder of Shakey's Pizza International. "Instead, we're making our portions a bit bigger. People who go to Shakey's expect value for money. Sometimes even if you have to pay P10 more but the volume of the food has doubled, I think it's worth it."

Since last year, Shakey's has made better, heftier portions for those with big appetites. Shakey's now has Super Platter (P130), a bigger version of the popular Bunch of Lunch (P85).

"Surprisingly, the Super Platter contributes more to our sales than the Bunch of Lunch despite the perceived economic downfall," notes Gregorio.

Just recently, Shakey's improved the popular Super Shake (P48) by coming out with shakes served in 12-inch tall glasses (P99). "Our goal is not to lower the price, our objective is best value for money. Just add a few bucks and you get a bigger portion."

Super Shakes come in chocolate, mocha, strawberry and vanilla flavors. Gregorio says they are made the old-fashioned way. "We're strict about the consistency of the shakes. Old-fashioned home-style ice cream shakes are thick and really creamy. When you order (a shake), you should have a hard time mixing it. The straw should stand, not sink or fall."

Shakey's Summer Salad (P85), good for two persons, uses only fresh Romaine lettuce, and not the more common iceberg variety. Customers have a choice of Tuna Caesar's Salad, Greek Salad (with black olives, salami slices, cucumbers and feta cheese topped with vinaigrette), and Chef's Salad (with cucumber and topped with sweet and tangy thousand-island dressing and garnished with hard-boiled egg, ham strips and croutons).

Copied but not equaled

Through the years, Pinoys have developed a taste for Shakey's original crisp and crunchy thin-crust pizza. "Shakey's is known for pizza, (more specifically, its pizza is) known for its thin crust. Others try to copy it. We tell them 'Good luck!'" Gregorio says.

To show its appreciation for its loyal patrons, the company has added more toppings on its pizza without increasing the price. "We added more meat, cheese and veggies to our pizza to delight our customers," says Gregorio.

Last year, Shakey's went back to the traditional way of cooking pizza-using the brick oven. "We made brick oven the main equipment again. But (for speed), we also experimented with some equipment like the electric-powered oven, but it does not cook the same way as the brick oven," Gregorio explains.

GOOD/D4

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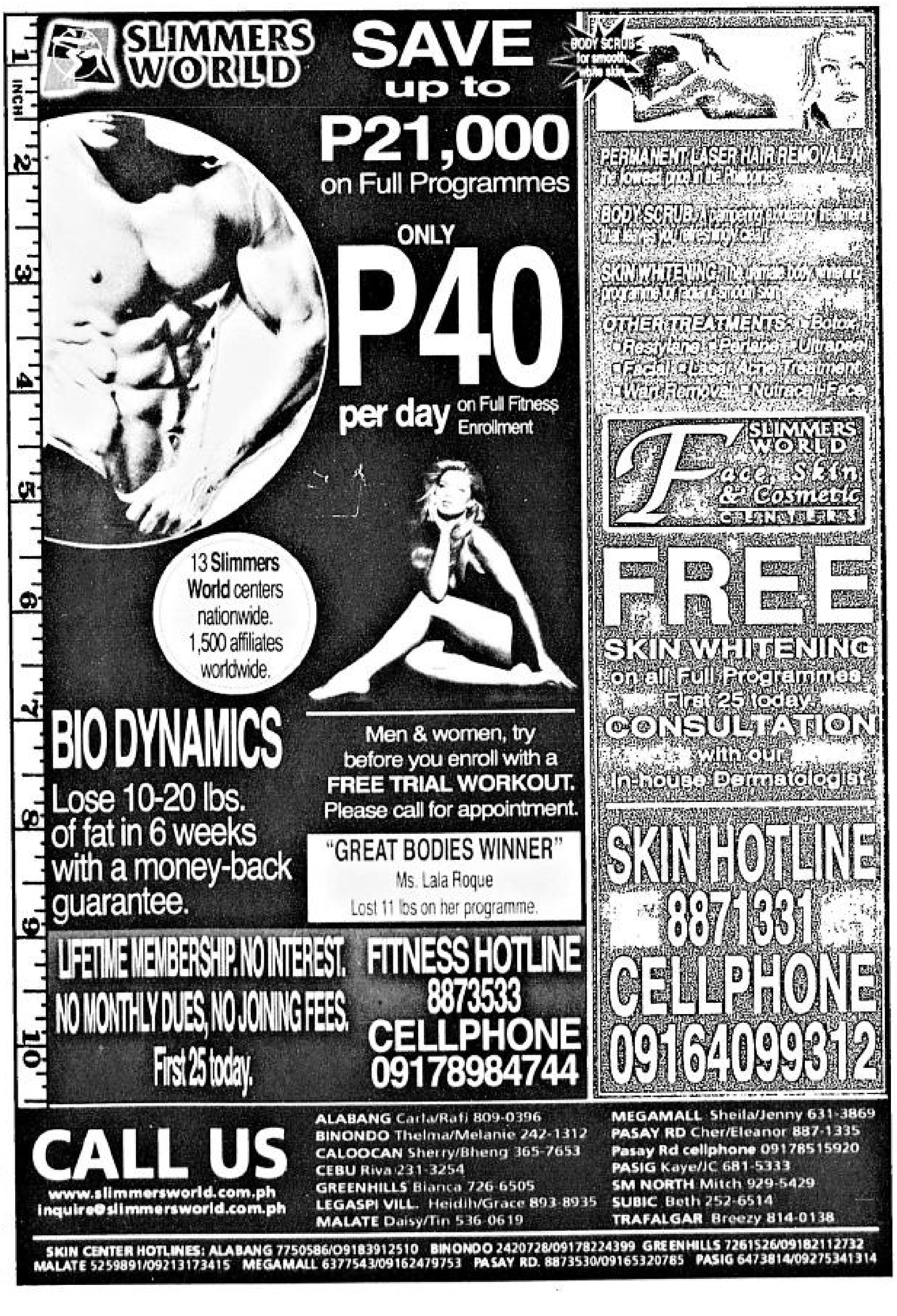
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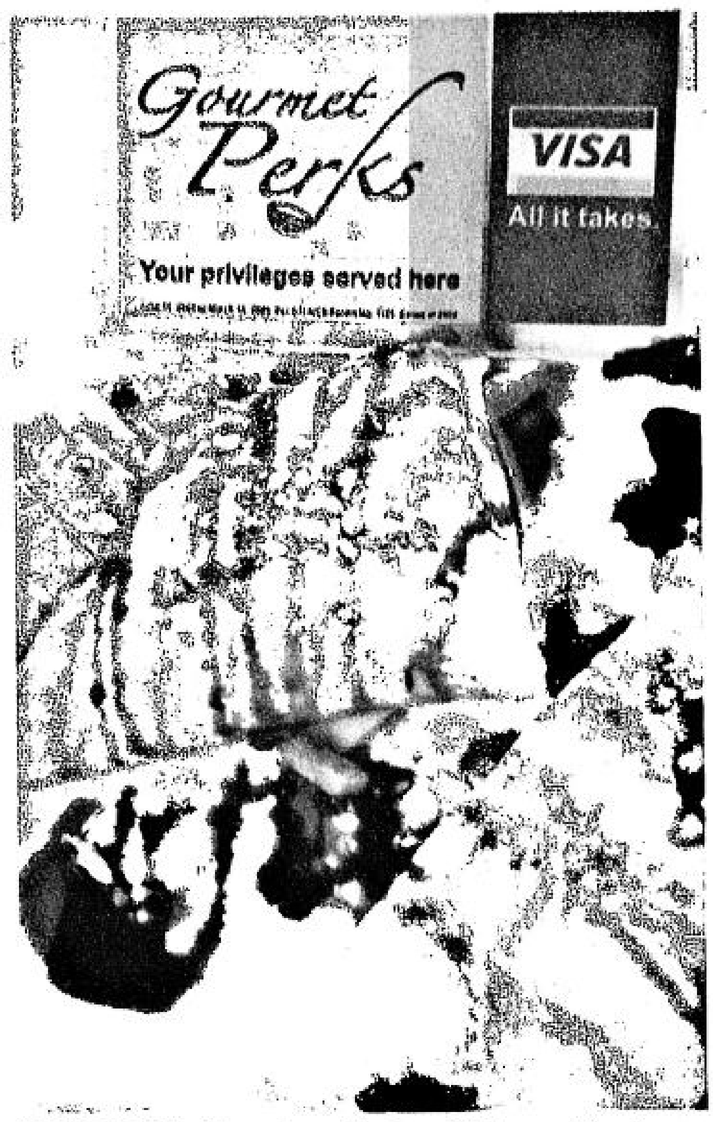
CHAMPION Foodies. Hosts Tricia Chiongbian, Boo Kyler, Visa's Jim Dixon and team Violet

WHAT they went through to win the race: eating yakisoba with their hands

ANGEL Jacob, Angel Aquino, chef Thomas Wenger of Mandarin Hotel

PINK Choir. Alex Paita of FHM, Elaine Batabara of Red Crab, Johanna Clavecilla of Figaro, Angel Jacob, Andrew Cajucom of Standard Chartered Bank at Red Box

SERIOUS Foodies: Henry Sin of Kaya Express, Jacs Sampayan of People Asia, Myla Gonzalez of AIG, Brad Turvey



MANGO Delight. Mango Crepe dripping with choco and strawberry syrup and crushed nuts with a minimum purchase of P800 at Pancake House.

ORIENTAL Vibe. Tohu Goreng, fried tofu generously crowned with fresh cucumber and bean sprouts and seasoned with flavored soy, teases your appetite with a minimum food purchase of P800 at Global Café

Now serving: dining perks!

By Beia Formoso
Contributor

> Dining out has never been this much fun: Visa's new promo promises a free meal for you and a generous bonus for your server

IF YOU happened to be in Greenbelt on Tuesday last week, you probably saw what looked like a bunch of crazy people running around in colored aprons, stuffing noodles into their mouths and gulping down liters of lemonade.

Were they chefs gone mad? No, they were participants in the Visa Amazing Food Race.

Visa International, the country's leading payment card brand, invited television personalities Angel Aquino, Angel Jacob, Happee Sy and JM Rodriguez, models Brent Javier and Brad Turvey, famous chef Thomas Wenger, Cynthia Carrion of the Philippine Olympic Sports Committee, hotshot restaurateurs, top business honchos, and journalists to help them launch their latest promo, Gourmet Perks.

The scavenger hunt had 10 five-member teams running and climbing escalators, singing their hearts out at karaoke and wolfing down heaps of food and drinks for the coveted prize of two round-trip tickets to Hong Kong for each member.

Fun-filled race

And race they did, from Italianni's at the end of Greenbelt 2 all the way up to Red Box at the third floor of Greenbelt 3, with stops at Via Mare Oyster Bar, Bizu and Nanbantei of Tokyo in between.

The adventure began and ended at Temple Bar, where hosts Tricia Chiongbian and Boo Kyler and Visa executives watched the progression of the race on TV monitors and welcomed the victorious Violet Team composed of Angel Aquino, Bob Tolentino of Unionbank, Banana Leaf Curry House president Waldon Chu, Food Magazine's Danny Manalo and Janis Gopez of Meg.

It was a fun-filled event that marked the beginning of an equally fun promo. All the restaurants just mentioned, plus 20 more in Greenbelt, 16 in Glorietta (both in Makati), two in El Pueblo in Ortigas and eight in Eastwood City (Libis, QC), add up to a total of 51 places where Visa cardholders can avail themselves of instant freebies, discounts, even a free meal in the Gourmet Perks program.

Yes, you read right: a free meal. A Visa "Mystery Diner" will be on the lookout for customers paying for their meal with their Visa card, and for waiters and attendants who prompt diners to use Visa. If the Mystery Diner catches you using a Visa card to pay for your bill, he/she will reimburse the cost of the meal (up to P5,000), and the waiter who served you will receive a tip of P3,000—on the spot. That means a free meal for you and a generous bonus for the server!

Already, two Visa cardholders have been spotted and treated out: Remedios Leal with waiter Cris Tanguin at Red Box, and Cress Caluag with waitress Donalyn Sagurit at Italianni's.

The Mystery Diner will circle the dining districts on different dates for the entire duration of the promotion, which runs until March 2005, allowing lucky diners the chance to win more than once.

ORANGE members Miguel Ongpin of Today, chef Thomas Wenger, Aloysius Alday of Metrobank

PURE white. Mulawin's Happee Sy, Ava Samson of Pink, Ricky Villacisneros of Citibank, Pamela Ong of Business Day and Red Box's James Aguilar

Freebies

Besides the possibility of getting a sumptuous meal free of charge, diners can get freebies (with a minimum purchase) by simply paying with a Visa credit or debit card at majority of participating establishments.

Get free Tohu Goreng (fried tofu with cucumber and bean sprouts) at Global Café, or Sisig, Fried Chicken and Crispy Pata at Gerry's Grill, or desserts like Mango Delight Crepe at Pancake House, Oreo Madness at T.G.I. Friday's, Chocolate Thunder at Outback, or Coffee Pie at Sentro 1771.

Says Jim Dixon, Visa's New Country Manager for the Philippines, "Filipinos simply love to eat and the Gourmet Perk's promotion is Visa International's way of rewarding Visa cardholders and injecting thrill and surprise into the local dining experience."

Dixon noted that the promotion is not only great for consumers but for Visa's merchant partners, and will surely help the company reach its goal to increase merchant acceptance in the country.

Next time you eat out, look for the "Gourmet Perks" yellow and blue sign and pay with your Visa card. Who knows? You may be spotted and have your meal paid for by Visa.

Savor the goodness of sea cucumber

DINING OUT

JADE Garden introduces new dishes with sea cucumber. They are Double-boiled Chicken with Sea Cucumber and Herbs Soup, Braised Abalone with Sea Cucumber, Braised Sea Cucumber with Roasted Pork and Garlic, Stir-fried Shredded Mix Vegetables with Sea Cucumber, Stewed Sea Cucumber with Dried Scallops and Minced Pork, Stir-fried Sea Cucumber with Green Pepper and Garlic, Braised Sea Cucumber with Black Mushrooms, Sea Cucumber with Minced Pork Sichuan Style, Steamed Stuffed Sea Cucumber with Crab Egg and Sea Cucumber with Beancurd and XO Chili Sauce in Hot Casserole. Jade Garden is located at Greenbelt 1, Greenbelt Drive, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8124548/ 8922319.

LUK YUEN Noodle House offers Mo Mo Cha Cha. This hot *halo-halo* has peanuts, *ube*, *gabi*, *sago*, special *bilo-bilo* stuffed with lotus cream, and coconut milk. Luk Yuen is located at Greenhills Shopping Center, SM Megamall Basement B, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Cash & Carry near Buendia, Paseo de Magallanes and Alabang Town Center.

ITALIANNI'S Restaurant in Greenbelt 2, Makati introduces four new dishes in "Pepe Fresco Carnevale." They are Grilled Pepper Crusted Pork Tenderloin, Grilled Pepper Crusted Beef Tenderloin Fillet, Half Bone-in Chicken and Grilled Pepper Crusted Fish Fillet. Other Italianni's outlets are located at Alabang Town Center, Glorietta 4, SM City Bicutan and Connecticut Carpark Building, Greenhills.

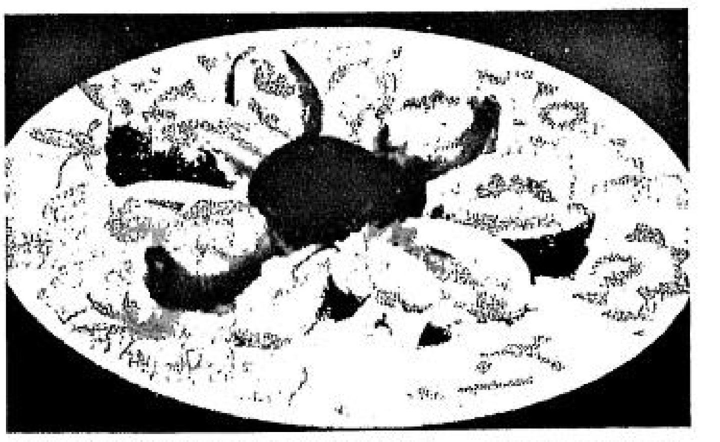
BRAVO! Ristorante Italiano offers Prosciutto e Pancetta (tomato, mozzarella, ham, bacon, black olives); Spaghetti al Filleto di Pomadoro, Gamberoni al Guazzeto (prawns in white wine sauce); Coteletta Pavarotti (beef tenderloin with extra virgin olive oil, garlic and rosemary). Bravo! Ristorante Italiano is located at Nakpil cor. Adriatico, Malate and the G/L Festival Supermall in Alabang.

FISH lovers would enjoy the Grilled Pepper Crusted Fish Fillet (new at Italianni's Restaurant)

HOLIDAY INN Resort Clark Field's Mequeni Restaurant features National Heroes Day lunch buffet on Aug. 29. Mequedeli offers Dinuguan at Puto, 3-5 p.m., for the whole month of August. Thailand Meets Mongolian is held at the Mongolian Rooftop Restaurant during weekends. Holiday Inn Resort Clark Field is located along Mimosa Road, Mimosa Leisure Estate, Clark Field, Pampanga. Call 8451888/ 045-5998000.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel presents the Pasundayag Food Festival until Aug. 21. The spread includes Humba de Bukidnon with Dried Octopus, Quail Adobo with Chicken Liver and Gizzard, Stingray in Coconut Milk and Hot Spice, Stuffed Crab Boiled in Banana Leaf and Peppered Roasted Ostrich. Call 5261212.

WINTER Garden of The Highlands China Palace in Tagaytay features Deep-fried Mandarin fish in sweet and sour sauce, Crispy Bean Curd with garlic spareribs, Shrimp Century Egg Roll, Steamed Saigon Fish with chili and black bean sauce and Spicy Curry Crab.

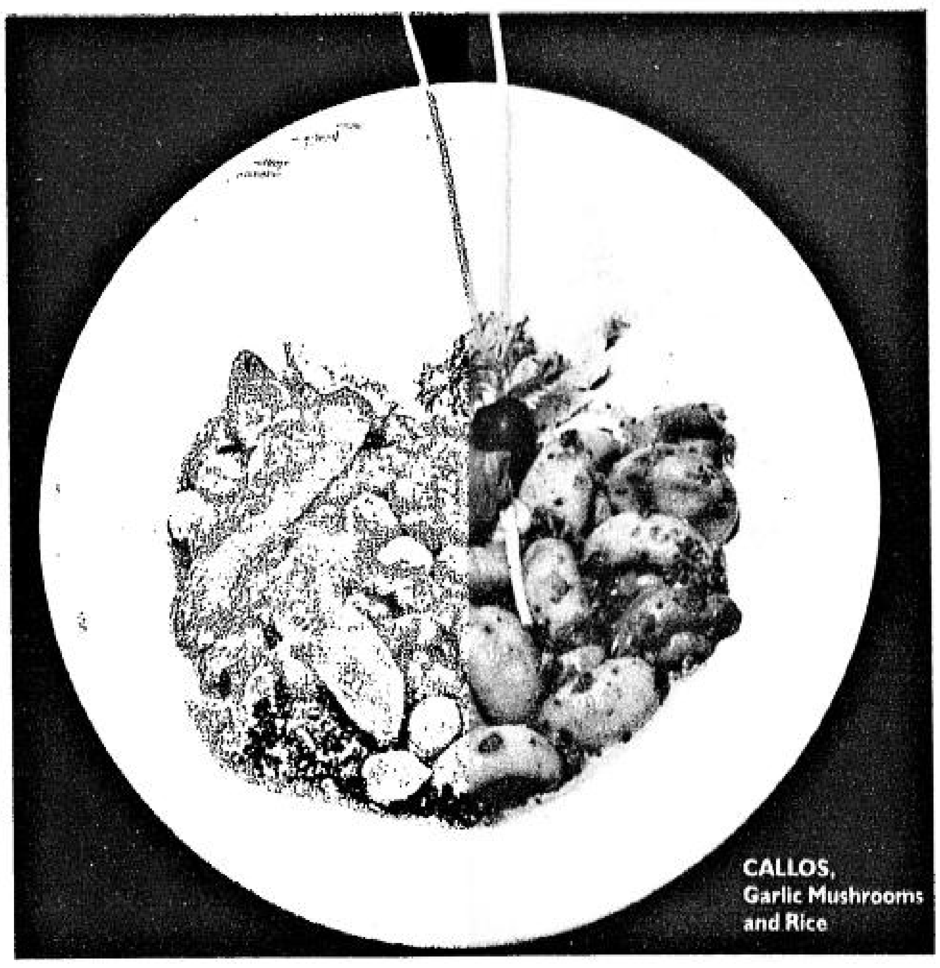

JADE Garden serves steamed minced-shrimp stuffed sea cucumber topped with crab egg.

EDSA Shangri-La's Nishiki presents Japanese eel as tempura, sarada with Japanese vinegar, yahata maki with goose liver sauce, shioyaki with ponzu jelly and iridashi. Call 6338888.

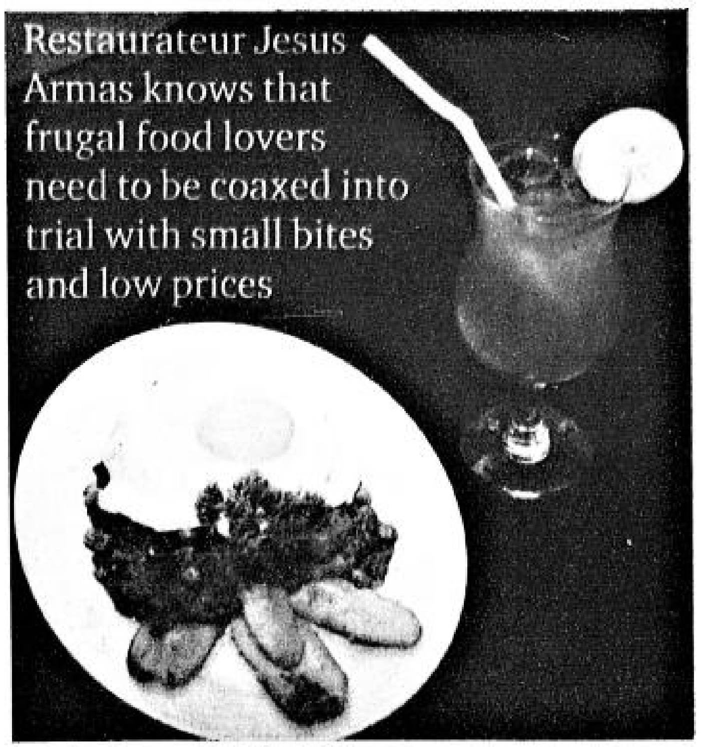
SUKA AT SILI Davao specializes in tuna dishes like Bagaybay (unfertilized tuna egg served either grilled or sizzling), Ubol-ubol (pressed tuna tendon served sizzling), Grilled or Sizzling Tuna Belly and Panga, Grilled Swordfish, Crispy Hito and Sizzling Squid. Suka at Sili Davao is located at 158-E D. Tuazon St., Sta. Mesa Heights, QC.

LENGUA Estofada, Croquetas de Pollo and Paella Valenciana

SALPICAO, Tortilla Paisana and Paella Valenciana



CALLOS, Garlic Mushrooms and Rice



Restaurateur Jesus Armas knows that frugal food lovers need to be coaxed into trial with small bites and low prices

ARROZ a la Cubana with Iced Tea

Spanish fare by 'combinados'

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Roger Carpio

REINVENTION is the name of the game when it comes to chain menus, and nowhere is creative change more obvious than in Taberna de Casa Armas. Its Platos Combinados promo offers house specialties as lunch value meals with a free drink and dessert.

Plato 1 (priced at P150) features Arroz a la Cubana; Plato 2 (P185) has Snipe Bird Adobo Flakes, Grilled Squid and Pickled Vegetables and rice; Plato 3 (P250), Lengua Estofada, Croquetas de Pollo and Paella Valenciana; Plato 4 (P250), Callos, Garlic Mushrooms and rice; Plato 5 (P250), Mixed Seafood in Tomato Sauce, Sauteed Mixed Vegetables and rice; and Plato 6 (P260), Salpicao, Tortilla Paisana and Paella Valenciana.

Smart restaurateurs like Jesus B. Armas recognize that consumers are loath to wager too much time or money on the unfamiliar; instead, they need to be coaxed into trial with small bites and low prices.

"Platos Combinados are a means to indulge in Casa Armas' flavorful treats of modest proportions at affordable prices," says Armas.

Call them tapas, appetizers or small plates. The important thing is when you eat such servings of foods, you can sample a wider variety. "And it's more fun than a skimpy course meal," he adds.

At present, Platos Combinados is only offered at Taberna de Casa Armas (tel. 8126003), located at the second level of Paseo Center, corner Sedeno, Paseo de Roxas, Makati. It also offers Hora Feliz (Happy Hour). For just P200, a diner can have five bottles of beer and one free tapas. One can choose from Baked Mussels, Garlic Mushrooms or Fried Squid Rings.

Casa Armas Tapas Bar y Restaurante's other branches can be found at 573 J. Nakpil St. cor. Bocobo St., Malate, Manila (tels. 5230189/5361839/ 5235763); 284 T. Morato Avenue, cor. Scout Rallos, QC (9254626/ 9254633); 3/L, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati (7574996/ 7574961); 132 Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, Makati (8973542/ 8973605); and The Podium, 18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong (6873663/ 6873370).

All these outlets proffer appetizers, seafood, omelette, assorted Spanish cold cuts, soup, salad, rice and pasta, rice meals, poultry and meat dishes, sandwiches and desserts for dine-in and catering.

Upscale but not stuffy

Armas, who has resided in the Philippines for 31 years now, put up the first Casa Armas in 1995 in Malate, Manila. His idea was to have a fine-dining place where great Spanish cuisine can be had for a good price.

"I wanted to create a nice, cozy atmosphere that feels upscale but not stuffy, so diners could come often," says Armas. The restaurants' rustic design is reminiscent of a Spanish bistro or taberna. In the Malate and Salcedo Village branches, musicians dish out Spanish music and Tagalog ditties.

For Armas, cooking in a contemporary Spanish style in a country where most people's knowledge of classic Spanish cuisine begins and ends with paella was almost a daring act.

"I offered my home country's regional dishes as well as updated classics. I can say that I was the one who started the paella, lengua, callos, boquerones, tapas, in the restaurant business," says Armas, who, at 14, worked as a dishwasher at a first-class restaurant in Spain before taking up a hotel management degree.

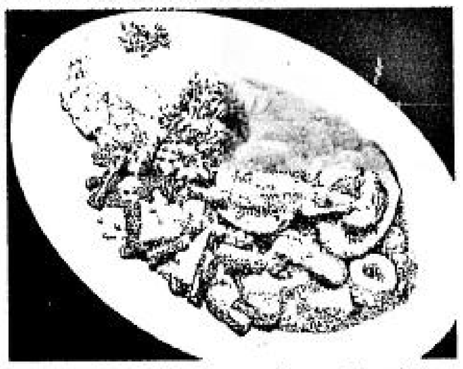
Although the Casa Armas restaurants in Makati and Mandaluyong are franchise outlets, Armas never fails to check on their quality control. He makes sure the cheese, olive oil, saffron, olives, asparagus, burritos, sausages and wines all come from Spain.

But at home, it's his wife who cooks Spanish and Filipino food, especially when entertaining friends.

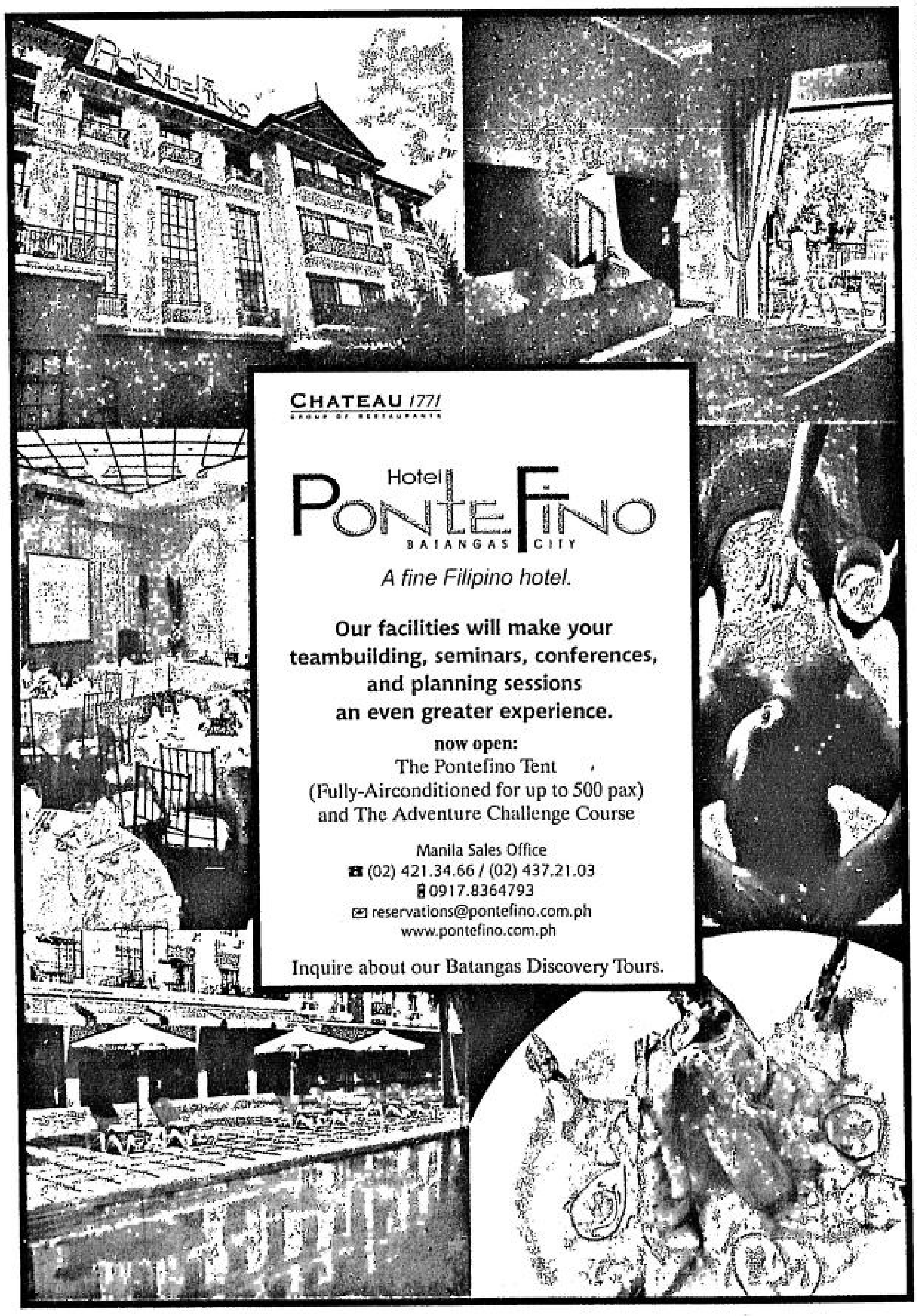
For people who love food, says Armas, Spanish cuisine is all about flavor and the joys of eating. "It's a way of enjoying life by sharing good moments and tastes with friends."

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

SNIPE Bird Adobo Flakes, Grilled Squid, Pickled Vegetables and Rice



MIXED Seafood in Tomato Sauce, Sautéed Mixed Vegetables and Rice



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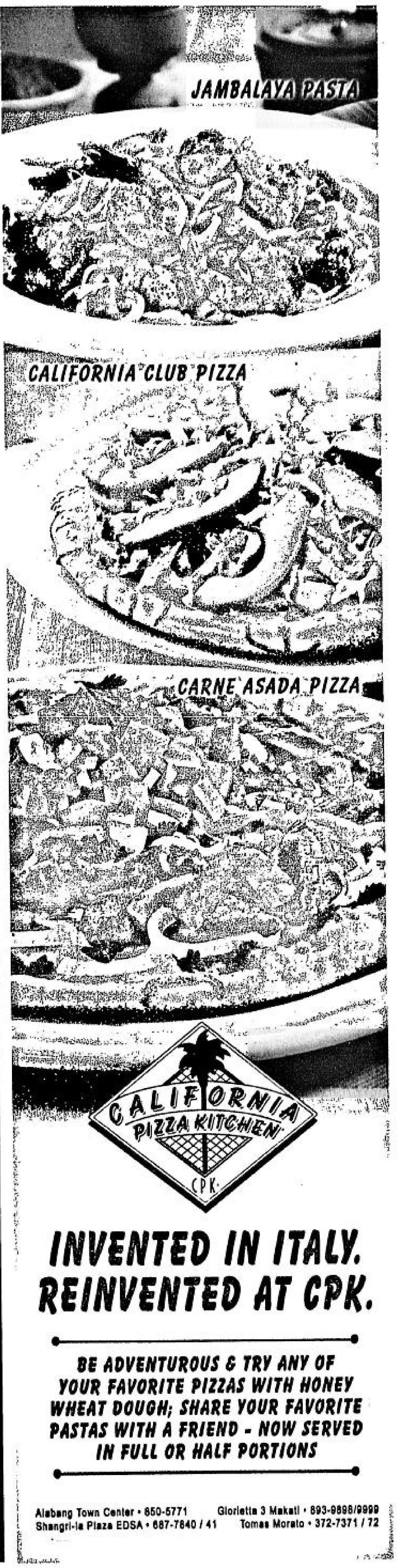

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Good old days are back

From page D1

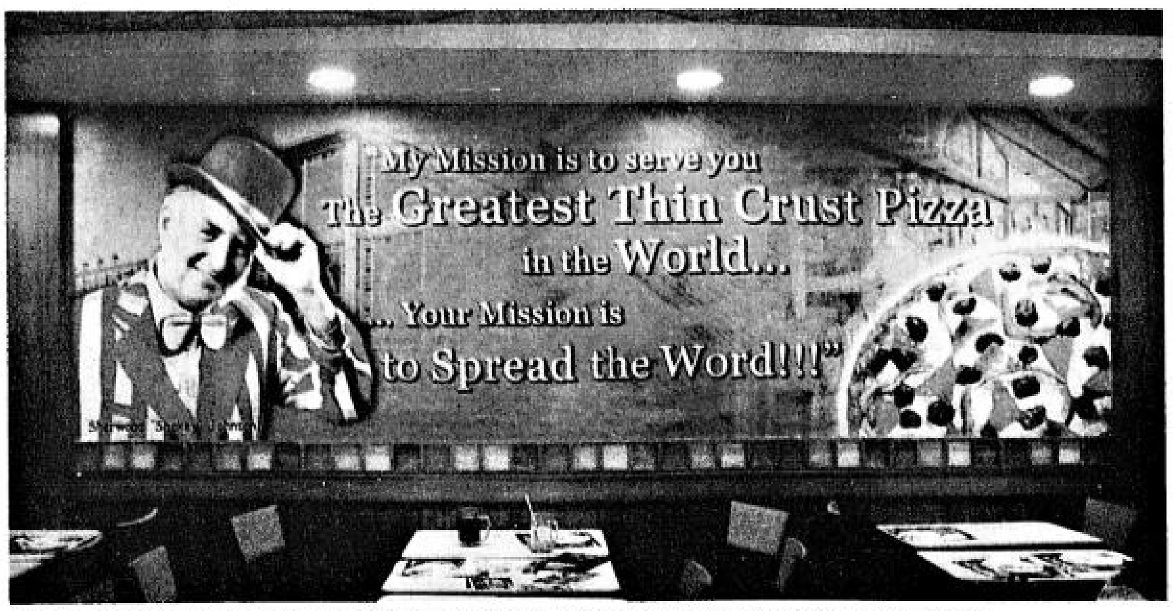
The brick oven perfectly cooks the crust and toppings, like the cheese. The pizza also tastes better and crispier. "With the other equipment, we don't achieve the same balance. Sometimes the toppings are overcooked (while) the inside is raw," Gregorio adds.

With the introduction of the ice cream bar, Shakey's has become a favorite for families with kids. For only P85, customers can craft their own ice cream masterpieces. They can create patterns and swirls, and choose from a variety of syrup flavors like chocolate and strawberry. And they can top their concoction with chocolate bits, candy sprinkles, corn flakes, nuts, pineapple or marshmallows.

So far, Shakey's ice cream bars have been set up at the Katipunan, SM North Edsa and Taft Avenue (across De la Salle University) branches.

Restoration

A market leader since 1975, Shakey's, which has now 85 branches across the country, "wobbled" a little sometime between 1999 to 2003. A big change occurred, which Gregorio feels did not jive with the brand's image. "It became more like a fastfood (joint)," he says. "Shakey's is very clearly not a fastfood place. If you want a quick bite and can spend only P50 or less, Shakey's is just not the place."


My Mission is to serve you
The Greatest Thin Crust Pizza in the World...
...Your Mission is to Spread the Word!!!"

WITH Shakey's new look, its founder Sherwood "Shakey" Johnson is now visible in some of its stores.

VICENTE Gregorio, general manager of Int'l Food Services Inc.

He adds, "Shakey's is a family or a casual dining restaurant. It is a place to enjoy, relax and spend time with family and friends. Shakey's is thin-crust pizza and you cannot pre-cook pizza. You have to bake it fresh all the time."

Gregorio, who joined the company only last year, knew Shakey's needed a shot in the arm. "When I got in, the restaurant just didn't look and feel like Shakey's...it was all chairs and fluorescent lamps. Colors were dull. They used colors that were not Shakey's, like teal green. Shakey's is red, yellow and orange. It is wood, Tiffany lamps, long tables and comfortable seating area for the family."

Thus, Shakey's is restoring its old look. No more fast-food ambience. No more fancy rounded logo. The classic 1970 insignia in red with the name Shakey's Pizza Great Place is back. The "comfortable, warm and familiar" look of Tiffany lamps and long tables is back.

"We have to bring back the elements of the old Shakey's...We have to work on the strengths Shakey's has built all these years, like great food, great service, comfy place and friendly people," says Gregorio.

Shakey's efforts are starting to pay off by earning two prestigious awards. It has just been named Most Outstanding pizza chain by the National Shoppers Choice Award and the number one national pizza chain in the country by the National Consumers Union.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Aromatherapy in a cup

IF you are having trouble starting your day right, have a cup of tea first thing in the morning.

Drinking tea is reportedly a form of aromatherapy, as it enhances your mood and makes you feel good. Inside the body, it is supposed to release a mixture of compounds that stimulate the brain, nourish the cells, aid digestion and calm the nerves.

Tea such as Lipton contains Theanine that makes you alert but relaxes you too.

The Lipton Yellow Label Tea is made from a blend of premium quality leaves from all over the world.

Jackie Lou stars in new 555 Carne Norte TV commercial

Jackie Lou Blanco, the Filipina icon for fitness, is once again appearing in the newest 555 Carne Norte TVC now showing on primetime television.

"I find it very exciting," says a visibly pleased Jackie Lou, referring to the new 555 Carne Norte TVC. That's why when they asked me if I'm interested in doing another commercial sequel, I said yes immediately! I wanted to do it. Natuwa talaga ako."

The new 555 Carne Norte TVC reinforces the protein-rich goodness and delicious taste of 555. It opens with Jackie Lou listening to her favorite workout music while enjoying her favorite meal of 555 Carne Norte. As the music and her appetite intensifies, Jackie Lou is seen tapping her feet and grooving to the music.

Like the previous 555 Carne Norte TVC's, the new commercial shows off physical power that comes from a protein-rich diet like 555 Carne Norte. As Jackie Lou starts tapping her feet, the powerful vibration causes the floor to crack and walls of neighboring houses to collapse. With an earphone on, a visibly bubbly and unsuspecting Jackie Lou, so engrossed on her 555 Carne Norte meal, continues to tap her feet, oblivious to the earthshaking commotion she is causing. The TVC then ends with the 555 tagline which encapsulates the brand's personality -- Yun ang sarap na may lakas protina!

"This commercial is really kakaiba!" enthused Jackie Lou, adding that it provided a welcome break from the various things that keep her occupied these days. These include hosting a segment for Unang Hirit where she gives helpful tips on quick workouts for women. On top of her TV weekly appearances, she also writes health and fitness columns for different publications like Philippine Star, Allure, He & She and Badminton magazine.

Jackie Lou Blanco in the new 555 Carne Norte TVC

Needless to say, Jackie Lou is the perfect choice for the new 555 Carne Norte TVC. As a fitness icon, Jackie Lou personifies health and fitness. Being a mom and a celebrity, she also embodies practicality and fun which is what the brand is all about.

"The 555 brand has really come a long way. You'll find a can of 555 Tuna, Sardines or Carne Norte almost all the time on the Pinoy dining table. We believe this is because it captures our uniquely Pinoy taste and mirrors our happy nature and zest for life, at a price that delivers the best value for money. That's why our omnibus tagline Sarap! Saya! Sulit! is really appropriate for all the 555 product lines," explained Owen Cruz, Product Manager of 555 Carne Norte.

To this, Jackie Lou wholeheartedly agrees. "I really love 555 Carne Norte. It's healthy, rich in protein and has a taste that's distinctly Filipino, which I love," she says. She insists she doesn't believe in special diets. "I just eat in moderation." Her practical approach to fitness has understandably spawned a lot of followers.

Recently, Jackie came out with her own exercise video called Working Out with Jackie Lou. A second video will soon be released, which means response has been very encouraging.

Yet, her priorities remain in order. "Family comes first," says this mother of 3 and wife to actor Ricky Davao. "I make sure I spend enough quality time with them. My TV segment is now once a week. I write when I'm at home. I do my workouts when my kids are in school. I know how to balance my time. Once you know this, you'll find your way around."

Obviously, Jackie Lou has found her way. "People would come up to me and say that I encourage them to go back to the gym. I'm just glad I can help people, affect people in another way. It's really a pleasant surprise."

Reaching out to people is something she obviously loves doing. "It's part of my advocacy. I'm happy I can inspire people to get fit. It's a personal thing for me and I'm glad I can communicate this message through the various activities that I do, including my role in the newest 555 Carne Norte TVC."

Sarap! Sulit! Saya! sa 555 Carne Norte
ADVT.

Earthquake rocks a neighborhood!
Cause of unusual tremors investigated

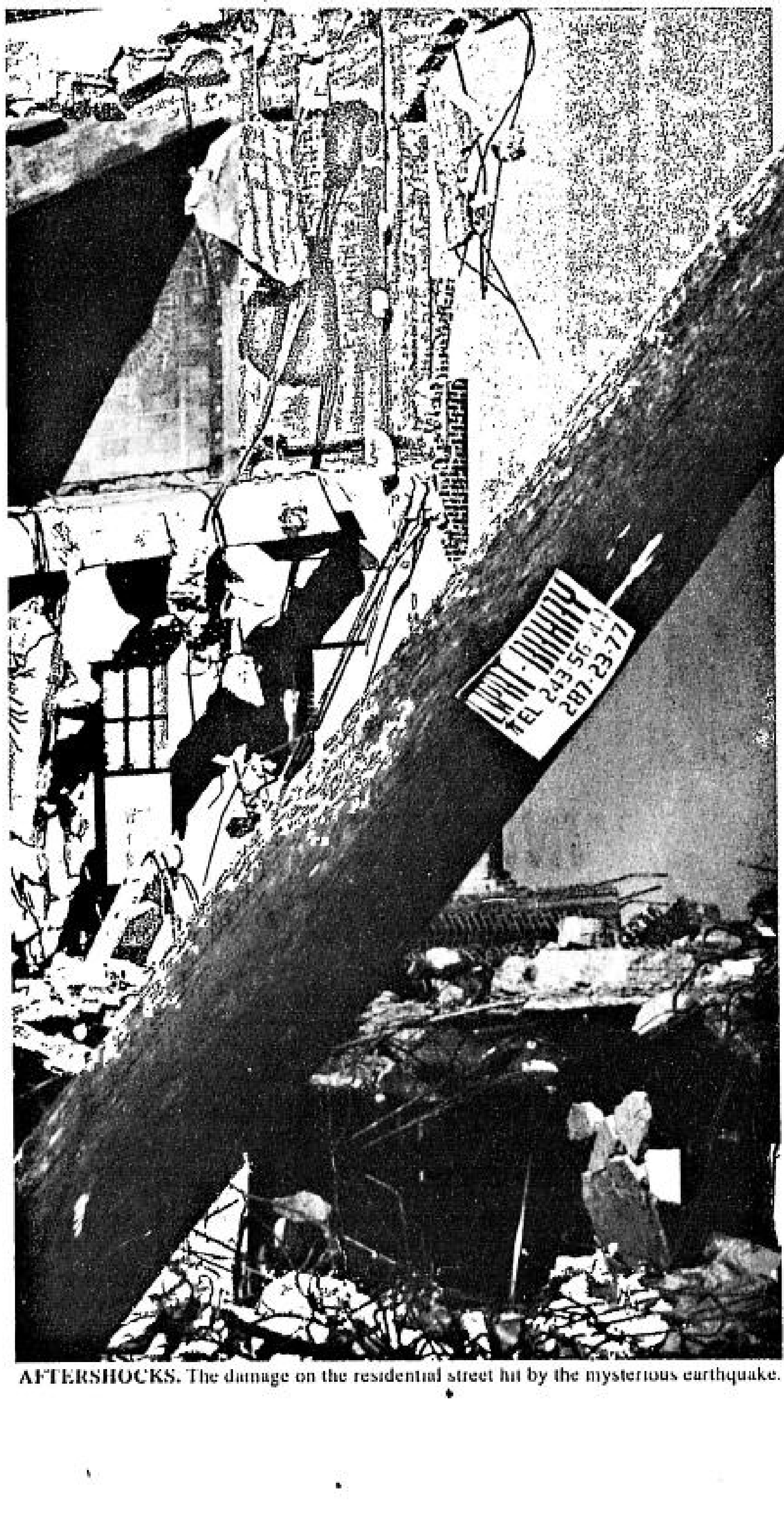
AN UNUSUAL phenomenon occurred yesterday when an earthquake hit only an isolated area of a neighborhood in Manila.

According to eyewitnesses, the tremors were felt only in one building and nearby structures. Most of the damage occurred in the Century Condominium building and an electrical post nearby.

Jackie Lou Blanco, actress and fitness expert who lives in the Century building was shocked to see the damage in the different floors.

"I was home, but I didn't feel the earthquake. Maybe I was too busy eating 555 Carne Norte! I was enjoying it so much because it was so delicious. Plus I was listening to great music the whole time, tapping my feet..."

Investigations have shown that the source of the earthquake was highly extraordinary. It seemed to have emanated from the third floor of the building, particularly in the unit where Ms. Blanco lives. Experts on the scene say that a strong force coming from that area caused the tremors and the subsequent damage. Upon further questioning, Ms. Blanco maintained that she was not aware of the earthquake during its occurrence, that indeed she was just eating 555 Carne Norte and tapping her feet to music at that time.



AFTERSHOCKS. The damage on the residential street hit by the mysterious earthquake.

555
CARNE
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WITH IMPORTED BEEF
'Yan ang sarap na may Lakas Protina!
Sarap! Saya! Sulit!